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With Christ in Russia

WITH CHRIST IN RUSSIA

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BY

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PREFACE

THE central figure in several of the chapters in this work is Rev. Wilhelm Fetler of St. Petersburg, who greatly facilitated my investigations in that city, and who has been my welcome guest on his visits to this country. But it will be borne in mind that the evangelical awakening in the Russian Empire is vastly greater than the ministry of one man, honoured of God as he undoubtedly is. There are many other brethren equally consecrated, equally heroic, some of them veterans in service, not a few of them men who have suffered greatly for Christ's sake in the dark and bloody past. The mention of one brother does not imply that these others are forgotten or undervalued. We bless God for them. We hold them in highest honour and love for their work's sake.

Readers of my earlier works, *Dr. Baedeker in Russia*, and *Under Three Tsars*, will be familiar with the historical genesis and the extensive sweep of the present most interesting movement in the religious life of this great people.

In these pages I have sought to describe scenes that took place under my own eyes, and also the impressions produced upon my mind by what I saw and heard, and learned from various sources, of the religious situation in Russia.

A political remark of Earl Macartney, ambassador to the Russian Court in 1764, may to-day be used respecting the influence upon Europe and the world of the present Russian spiritual awakening :

" Russia is no longer to be gazed at as a distant glimmering star ; but as a great planet that has obtruded itself into our system, whose place is yet undetermined, but whose motions must powerfully affect those of every other orb."

R. S. LATIMER.

Brixton,
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UP THE BALTIC

I

UP THE BALTIC

GOD gave us a pleasant voyage to Hangö. The *Arcturus* is a stout and steady boat of the Finland Line, sailing from Hull and flying the Russian flag. Winds and waves were inclined to be amiable, and we enjoyed bright sunshine every day.

Rev. W. Fetler makes no pretensions to being a good sailor, and he therefore prefers the somewhat tedious overland route to St. Petersburg via Berlin and Wirballen. But they who find keen pleasure in the bracing sea-breezes, the delicious quietude, the restful idleness, and the interesting companionships of an ocean voyage, will do well to approach the capital of Russia via the German Ocean, Copenhagen, and the Baltic.

The Danish and Swedish coasts in the Cattegat and the Sound are a panorama of great attractiveness. Fancy descries the gaunt figure of Hamlet, prince of Denmark, on yonder headland to the right, in front of his castle of Elsinore. The

Danish fishermen whose craft you pass as you travel south to Copenhagen harbour, give you the cheeriest of greetings in their own tongue. The picturesque townships and humbler hamlets that nestle among the low hills of the coast appeal mutely to you as you pass to pay them a visit and make a closer acquaintance with their quaint and peaceful loveliness. And when the night settles down and you return to the darkened deck from dinner, it is intensely interesting to note the gradual approach to Copenhagen harbour, and the skill of the pilot in effecting an entrance. For miles before you reach them you can see across the waters the red light and the green light that mark the channel. Their faint glow among the innumerable lights along the coast and of the shipping that twinkle fairylike in the Sound gradually increases in brilliancy as you approach.

There is just time for a run through the royal city of Copenhagen, and a rapid glance at some of its more interesting features, and then we are out once more upon the high seas. We run close to the Swedish coast. The important town of Malmo lies to the left. The German trains are here carried across the Sound between Copenhagen and Sweden. Presently we sight the Falsterbo Lighthouse, that marks the most southerly limit of the coast of Sweden, and, round-

ing the headland, we steam eastward, and then northward ; we are at last in the Baltic. The next day we pass the long low islands of Oland and Gothland. Far away in the north-east the faint blue lines on the horizon reveal the islands that lie off the Russian coast, our first faint view of that great empire some of the secrets of which we shall shortly discover.

A loud knocking at the door of the cabin in the early morning recalls to consciousness.

" You must get up at once. I have been up since four o'clock, and on the bridge with the captain. It is lovely ! " It was the imperative voice of an enthusiastic young travelling companion.

Leaping at once out of the berth and to the porthole light, the scene outside was eagerly surveyed.

" We appear to be passing along a low shore, which is lightly powdered with snow." This to the passenger who occupied the other berth in the little cabin, a Finn returning to his native Wasa after years of absence in the United States.

" Let me look ! " he exclaimed, as he hurried to the porthole. " It is not shore we see. That is ice ! The sea is frozen. We are breaking our course through it. We must be somewhere near Hangö."

It was indeed as he said. The sight was familiar enough to him. Hastening on deck, as far as the eye could see in all directions except straight ahead, there stretched an immense plain of ice, comparatively level for the most part, but here and there piled up in rough masses and glittering in the clear air and the morning sunshine. In front in the distance lay the Finnish coast. The *Arcturus* was steadily smashing her way through the crystal obstruction.

" Here comes the Ice-Breaker, cutting a road for us : we shall get along more quickly when we reach the open track of broken ice," said the Finnish passenger.

The Ice-Breaker, a strongly-built little steamer, keeps open, all the winter through, a highway for vessels entering and leaving Hangö harbour. When all the coasts of Finland and her innumerable islands are sealed up by frost, and unapproachable, Hangö is kept open for communication by sea with the outer world. The beautiful and spacious harbour of Helsingfors, which we surveyed later from the commanding eminence, Observatory Hill, is for half the year a solid mass of ice. All the shipping is just frozen in. Steamers, and fishing-boats, and pleasure-yachts, small craft, and even the light-ships brought in in the autumn from the surrounding seas and channel-waterways among the islands (for light-

ships are unnecessary when shipping ceases to pass to and fro), are congealed into one immoveable block, until the genial Spring breathes again, loosens the frosty grip of dying Winter, and they are again free for their brief and busy summer service.

What a charming place Hangö is ! The pine-tree and the fir skirt the beach of the little bay, and nestling among the trees are the wooden dwellings, cottages and villas with pretty gables and projecting eaves, all painted vividly according to the wont of the forest population of northern Europe.

From the train, with its welcome warmth of double windows and doors, and its huge stove in each carriage, Finland looked like an interminable forest of firs and pines and silver-birch trees, and withal robed in spotless snow. At every station great stacks of timber awaited removal, some of it by sea to foreign lands, but the greater part in all probability for home consumption as fuel.

Logs are burned in the aforementioned big stove in our railway carriage ; and however keen may be the frosty air outside it is cosy enough within our compartment. We stop at Hyvinka Junction. Hyvinka will always recall pleasant memories. We breakfasted at the buffet on that station once upon a time, and were over-

joyed to discover among the savoury dainties that crowd the free-and-easy Finnish *smergasbord*, a dish of homely porridge. The Finnish *smergasbord* would need a book to itself. It is the preliminary skirmish to every serious meal; and consists of—well, a little of anything or everything, cooked and uncooked, fish, flesh, and fowl, just as you please, take where you like, to sharpen your appetite for what may come after. There was provision for the mind, too, at Hyvinka. It was interesting to observe in the book kiosk Finnish translations of Rev. F. B. Meyer's books and of Dickens and a few other familiar English authors. There was a great crowd of Russian marines on the platform that morning. They were on the way to Great Britain, their officer in command told us, to take over from the builders, on the Clyde, a Russian battleship.

We also pass through Wiborg, a fascinating old town dominated by an ancient castle on an island in the bay, and closely girt landwards by dense and far-reaching forests. Here is the junction for the far-famed Imatra rapids, said to be "the mightiest and grandest rapids in Europe." The roar of the rushing waters may be heard six miles away. At night they are illuminated by electricity. Tourists travel great distances to see this awe-inspiring spectacle.

The night closes around us, as we speed swiftly

towards the frontier. We have passed through Terijoki, the last station in Finland, and are now slowing down for the next stop, Valkeasaari.

Finland approximates more to Western Europe than to Russia even in the matter of time. On that boundary line we dropped an hour in a few seconds, and we adjusted our watches accordingly.

"Oh, do come and look!" exclaimed our young fellow-traveller, who was seated at the far window of the compartment, as the train came to a standstill. "There appear to be soldiers all along the line between the metals!"

But the platform side presented a sufficiently engrossing spectacle. Uniformed men were to be seen everywhere. We had arrived at the frontier station, and the train was to be searched. A file of soldiers guarded the platform, while their comrades on the line prevented the escape in the rear of any would-be evil-doer. This was our first taste of Russia. Four of the Tsar's men entered our compartment, two of them officers. Bowing politely, they inquired for our passports, after inspecting which they instructed their subordinates to search our luggage. When they had done this thoroughly, the men examined the compartment most carefully. Standing upon the seats, they searched with eyes and hands the rack overhead. Then they removed the

seat-cushions, and finally they knelt and explored the corners beneath the seats.

"What do you think they were looking for?" inquired a Russian gentleman in the compartment, when the soldiers had retired.

"Spirits or tobacco, I suppose," I replied. "These are what our English customs officers look for chiefly."

The Russian laughed.

"You are quite wrong," he said. "They are searching for bombs. This is the road by which the revolutionaries bring their explosives into the country. Consequently the tchinovniks are very much on the alert. If you would like to see some fun, come and see the third-class passengers searched."

We went; and enjoyed the rout much more than the sleepy victims did. Two persons, a young man and a young woman, were taken to a waiting-room for a more detailed examination. They looked like students. They emerged with triumphant smiles upon their faces. Then the train steamed forward into the darkness, and the Russian, in hesitating English, drew vivid pictures of revolutionary cunning and daring hereabouts, and of the efforts of the authorities to circumvent their schemes. The excitement of the narrations made our flesh creep. We cast fearsome glances towards the door of the com-

partment, as though in mortal fear that an armed desperado might at any moment seek refuge with us from fierce pursuers.

A British friend of Mr. Fetler's met us at the St. Petersburg station. Glad indeed were we to hear his musical voice bidding us welcome to Russia. He haggled with the clamorous droshky-drivers, and engaged two of them. How swiftly do these little conveyances rush forward over the cobbled roadways, the horses urged forward by the incessant voice of the driver! And the air, how clear and keen it is; and the stars overhead, how big and bright! Now we are crossing the Neva by the long Alexander Bridge. The river is frozen over from bank to bank, but the ice has ceased to be safe for transit across. That long line of glittering lights to the right marks one of the spacious granite embankments with its imposing array of palaces. We shall drive past them directly. There is a surprising number of people about, considering that it is midnight. The droshkies are hurrying in all directions. What a long distance it is to the Great Morskaja! No wonder people wear thick furs and goloshes here, it is so cold. Our stout British overcoat seems to have become appreciably thinner within the last twenty minutes.

Here we are at last! The isvostchiks are paid off, but linger to see us enter. The lazy dvornik

or concierge rouses himself very leisurely to open the gate for us. The courtyard is dark, and the inner door admits to a darkness that may almost be felt. We grope our way in, and blunder up an ancient staircase towards the second floor. A light glimmers above us.

"Welcome to St. Petersburg!" exclaims a voice at the head of the stairs. It is the voice of our friend Mr. Fetler!

WITHIN ST. PETERSBURG

II

WITHIN ST. PETERSBURG

WHENCE did the city get its name? Who is the Peter, whose burg it is alleged to be?—the Apostle Peter? Not at all. It was not he but Tsar Peter the Great who gave the name to the mighty metropolis on the banks and islands of the Neva.

"But," you protest decisively, "Peter the Great was no saint!"

Agreed. Tsar Peter was a great monarch, shrewd, painstaking, far-seeing, of tremendous energy and originality. He was the maker of modern Russia. He has left his impress on the empire for all time. But he could not truthfully be called a "saint."

"Then why Saint Peter's burg?"

The "saint" refers not to the Tsar Peter, but to his city. It is a *sancta urbs*, the holy burg of Peter, the capital of the holy Russian Empire.

At the same time that under our William III.

the glorious Protestant Revolution took place in Great Britain, a mighty social and economic revolution took place in Russia. The new era that brought that empire so intimately into contact with western Europe demanded as its outward and visible sign a new city. This new city must be more accessible to Europe, and more in affinity with the nations of the west than hoary Moscow; hence Peter's holy burg built in stately western fashion on the north-western rim of the empire.

Peter called the city his window, from which he could look out into Europe.

St. Petersburg is ripe to be reaped for the Lord Jesus. The precious grain is even falling out of the ears. We cannot forget how the Redeemer surveyed Jerusalem from the heights of Olivet. There are no hills about St. Petersburg. Stand upon the broad entrance steps of the city Duma, and view the scene. Away to the right and left, as far as the eye can see, runs the great Nevsky Prospect, the principal thoroughfare of the city. This stately and spacious highway is filled with people, and droshkies (comfortable little conveyances peculiarly Russian), and electric cars, and all the throng and rush of the life of a great city. In the multitude a monk or pope, with long hair and untrimmed beard, a Chinese packman, a provincial moujik, and a surprising

number of men in various uniforms, make the panorama quite un-English.

The city Duma building is the Guildhall and Mansion House of Petersburg. The great hall will hold perhaps two thousand people. There is a gallery around it. The walls are furnished with great mirrors and oil-paintings of the successive rulers of the empire since the days of Peter the Great.

"What a fine place for the preaching of the Gospel!" you exclaim.

It is; and now, for the first time in the history of the city, the Gospel has been preached in it! On the Tuesday of the Russian Easter week two years ago there gathered together here the eight Evangelical Sunday-schools of the city, upwards of five hundred children, with their teachers and many friends, to hold a "festival." The presenting of the petition asking permission to hold this festival is another story, and demands a chapter of its own. The programme, which included a "sale of work" on behalf of foreign missions, began at two in the afternoon, and lasted until nearly midnight. Pastor Arndt, of the German Baptist Church; Brother Kargel, that veteran in Evangelical work in the city, who will be remembered as the companion and interpreter to Dr. Baedeker in his first great journey across Asia; Mr. Prokhanoff, an enterprising

engineer and publisher of the city, and other brethren, took active part in the proceedings of that eventful day. In the evening Mr. Fetler, to whose bold initiative and perseverance the gathering was due, gave a lecture to the great assembly on "The Resurrection of Christ," and Mr. Kargel followed upon the same subject. These meetings, in the chief hall of the city, made a deep impression, and have since been followed up by similar efforts.

Adjoining the hall, through one of the mirrored doors, is the chamber of the city deputies, with its semicircular tiers of seats, in which the councillors of Petersburg, under the chairmanship of the chief magistrate, hold their deliberations. This hall has been generously placed at the disposal of Mr. Fetler for a Gospel service.

We are out again in the Prospect. Close at hand is the famous Cathedral of Kazan. Here beside us is the shrine of a saint, and in front of it is an eddy in the ceaseless human stream. The people stop to bow and cross themselves, or to enter and worship. "Seeing the multitudes, He was moved with compassion." Our heart goes out to these devout souls. The superstition distresses us, but the manifest sincerity commands our respect, and the intense earnestness of many of the worshippers fills our eyes with tears. Their piety is beyond question. One

woman falls upon her knees, and reverently presses her brow upon the cold stones again and again. Inside the small shrine, which is crowded with worshippers crossing themselves and kissing the holy pictures, the priests are reading the Gospels in an unknown tongue (the old Slavonic), and reciting prayers. The sanctuary walls are bright with the glitter and gilt of the holy pictures (ikons) of various "saints," to which the lips of the devout are pressed in a ceaseless procession. There are boys upon their knees, ladies in costly furs and velvets, venerable beggars of both sexes, working men, and men in uniform—a most miscellaneous company. When Paul beheld the Athenians at their worship, his spirit was stirred in him. "You are too religious!" he exclaimed.

We would probably not say that of the Russians, because the alternative before them is so appalling —the lust of the flesh and atheism. Better far is their "ignorant worship" than these. Great masses of the urban population of Russia have already lapsed into infidelity: in the upper classes, cynical and licentious atheism; in the working classes, fierce and revolutionary atheism. Increasing numbers of people pass by the shrines and make no sign! What lies ahead? The people are devout by hereditary instinct. Is it not possible to win them in thousands for the

Lord ? There is every reason to believe that it would be an easy matter. We are not straitened in Him !

Let us turn in here, and call upon Mr. Zacharoff. Up the stairs, and through the door on the first floor, are his apartments. Mr. Z. F. Zacharoff is a member of the States Duma—the Russian Parliament. He represents a constituency in the Taurida Province, in South Russia, and this is his city home. He is the only Evangelical member of the present Duma, so far as I am aware, although he has many colleagues in the Duma who are equally champions of liberty of conscience, among whom are Professor Tagantzeff, President Kamensky, Mr. Rudolf von Tregmann, and others. Mr. Zacharoff is, however, unique. He is the president of the Molokani of South Russia, a shrewd, burly, genial, well-to-do farmer, with hearty manners and pleasant voice, and, moreover, an earnest Christian worker.

Since his arrival to attend the Parliamentary sessions, Mr. Zacharoff has preached several times in the city among the " Evangelical Christians," as many of the Molokani prefer to call themselves.

With his wife and a soldier friend from South Russia (also a believer), Mr. Zacharoff is seated at lunch as we enter ; but in a few minutes the

three reverently rise and return thanks, and we enter into an animated conversation. He unfolds with joy and pride the plans and elevations of the proposed training college for pastors and preachers, to be built by the Evangelical Churches of South Russia. They have not yet received the permission of the authorities to build the institution, but hope to receive it shortly, and are anxious that believers in England and America shall help them with funds. The Molokani are a homely people, eager to know the way of the Lord more perfectly, and to spread Gospel light in Russia.

In September 1905, immediately after religious liberty was granted, this college was founded in Astrahanka, Taurida Province. A house was generously given, and fitted up and furnished, for the purpose. An able and spiritual young Lutheran pastor was appointed as teacher. This is a work of immense importance in the evangelisation of the Empire.

"I knew Dr. Baedeker well," he said, "and loved him much. He was frequently my guest during his visits to our province. Could you not come south to confirm the believers in their faith, and preach the Gospel as he used to do?"

The writer regretfully shook his head, a language that needed no interpretation.

"Then perhaps you would like to pay a visit

to the States Duma. You will not understand our debates, but the scene will interest you."

Thankfully accepting Mr. Zacharoff's kind invitation, and in our hearts praising God for such a man—and that instead of toiling in the mines of Siberia he was helping in the councils of the Empire—we took our leave, and went forth once more into the fascinating Nevsky Prospect, to visit the extraordinary Lavra (Monastery) at its extreme end, the Monastery of St. Alexander Nevsky.

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WILHELM FETLER, EVANGELIST

III

WILHELM FETLER, EVANGELIST

A BRILLIANT blue velvet table-cover adorns the small table in front of the platform. Upon it rests a light reading-desk, whereon lies a Bible. But Pastor Fetler brings to the meetings his own Bible, and hymn and tune-books. There are two or three plain wooden chairs behind the table. The appointments are of the simplest character. There is nothing whatever suggestive of the ecclesiastical. Beside the small table is a grand piano. The narrow platform is occupied by the choir. The large room is packed with eager men and women, nearly as many standing as there are seated.

Is there a British counterpart to William Fetler? It is not easy to point to one. He has distinctive qualities and idiosyncrasies. The personality most frequently called to mind, as he stood in front of his Russian audiences, attracting every eye and swaying the great throngs, was that of Evan Roberts of Wales. In their youth, in the intensity of their devotion, in

their spiritual exultation and triumph, in their magnetic fascination of the multitude, the two appeared to be for a time alike.

The Russians themselves, but few of whom probably have ever heard of Evan Roberts, mentioned another and a greater name for the purposes of comparison. A burly and genial Russian seized the writer rather unceremoniously and with great heartiness at the close of one of the meetings, and after inflicting two emphatic kisses on the cheeks, exclaimed in obviously difficult and explosive English :

" Brotherr-Fetlerr-Russian-Spurrgeon ! "

Being encouraged with several nods of hearty approval, he continued, giving one a tremendous shake of the hand, and beaming with delight,

" Brotherr-Fetlerr-me-converrted ! "

Wilhelm Fetler has without doubt gained the public ear in St. Petersburg. He has been having a great reaping and ingathering season, particularly among the working-classes of the city, since his arrival in the summer of 1907. There appears to be no limit to the willingness of the multitude to come and listen to the Gospel from his lips. The men will stand patiently in long rows in the narrow aisles of his meeting-places for hours, block up the doorways and fill the ante-rooms in their earnest enjoyment of these means of grace so novel to them. Nor has the

young evangelist yet discovered the limits of his physical strength in this soul-stirring service. He works night and day at high pressure, for his parish is vast, and the Macedonian calls to come and help are innumerable. It is of the great mercy of God that he has not yet had a serious breakdown. Certainly he has some valuable helpers; but he ought to be protected against himself. God has bestowed a choice gift upon Russia in the person of this able Gospel preacher, and a most opportune gift. There ought to be much judgment exercised in its disposal, so that it may be used to the utmost advantage in the service of our Divine Master.

An easy familiarity with seven languages is one of Mr. Fetler's endowments. He is able to preach fluently in German, Lettish, Russian, or English. He can also read the classical languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. As an example of his linguistic abilities and his unwearied activities, take one Sunday's preaching in St. Petersburg. At the Lettish morning service, which began promptly at ten o'clock, he interpreted the address of an English preacher into Lettish and also preached in the same language, afterwards holding a conversational meeting for anxious inquirers, which continued until 1 p.m. There were about thirty or forty persons present at the latter meeting, the majority being men.

Every minute of the afternoon after a hurried meal was taken up in the supervision of several of his Sunday-schools.

The evening was given to the Russians. He interpreted the addresses of two English preachers into Russian, and then interpreted for Pastor Kroker, a German pastor from South Russia, German into Russian. He then delivered an address himself in Russian. He had thus delivered four distinct addresses in one evening, using three languages, a truly remarkable performance in itself; but this was not all. The service began at six o'clock, and was continued until quite late at night, and every moment of it, with the exception of a brief address by Evangelist Odinsoff of South Russia, the spirit and "go" of the meeting, humanly speaking, appeared to be dependent on him. He led the singing himself—notwithstanding the presence of the choir. He accompanied on the grand piano. He interspersed remarks throughout the entire proceedings. And the people leaned forward in their seats and hung upon his utterances as though spellbound. He discarded reading-desk and table, and stood forth in the clear, in front of the people, self-forgetful, possessed with a sense of the surpassing value of the opportunity and of the Divine message he was called to proclaim.

Only just twenty-seven years of age ! It seems incredible that he is so youthful ; but he has had a wide experience of life and has seen much arduous and anxious service. Tall, slim, muscular, with black hair and deep-set penetrating eyes that flash upon you through his glasses, he is the embodiment of intelligent decision of character and consecrated enthusiasm. His voice is melodious and appealing, reminding one of Gipsy Smith's more pathetic tones. He has more animation and gesture than the gipsy. There is much use of handkerchiefs during the pauses in the service. The people are moved like a cornfield in the breeze. It is a sight to be remembered, the wistful emotion upon their faces. At certain passages in the address the stillness is intense, and the preacher's voice sinks almost to a whisper. Unquestionably he is an orator, artless and unaffected in the employment of his powers, and natural as a child, but possessing exceptional gifts.

When the people kneel down to pray—for although the hall is crowded, all fall upon their knees in the approach to God ; the Russians are an intensely devout people—the effect is indescribable. Wave after wave of emotion thrills the assembly during the ten or fifteen minutes of intercession. There is no loud voice heard, but there is an evident eagerness to join

audibly in prayer. Occasionally several voices will be heard softly pleading at one time. What does it matter? They are praying to God, not to the meeting. The tones are so tender and so pathetic, and there is such a persistent gentle undertone, a wail of yearning desire rising almost to a sob, that the heart would be hard indeed that was not deeply moved. When the congregation arose and the people resumed their seats, there was an interval of at least five minutes before they had composed themselves to silent attention.

Let it be remembered that preaching in Russia is extremely rare except in the Lutheran and Evangelical bodies. Gospel preachers are few indeed and far between, "a handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountains." There are no public halls that may be engaged for religious services. The authorities have hitherto set their faces against all irregular public gatherings, lest they should prove to be the media of revolutionist propaganda.

For a year or two Mr. Fetler and his supporters succeeded in hiring a school-building or gymnasium for his Sunday services. The smaller class-rooms were useful for ante-rooms and inquirers' rooms. But this was only available for the Sunday; and even for these meetings it was small and inconvenient, as are the premises at present occupied as the mission centre. Not-

withstanding these and other difficulties, a solid and enduring work has been accomplished.

A great feature of the meetings is the inspiring singing. If the language of prayer and address is unfamiliar, the tunes suggest words well known, and sentiments common to believers everywhere. "There is a better world," "Come, oh, come to Me," "Sowing the seed," "All hail the power," and other favourites are sung with great heartiness. The rich bass of the men's voices is very effective. Mr. Fetler has translated the "Glory Song" and some other popular hymns into Russian, and they "go" with a good swing. There is also a simple Russian hymn by the Grand Duke Constantine, "I am standing at the door and knocking," which is a favourite at the meetings.

It may safely be said that there is never a Gospel service held without conversions resulting. Decision cards are issued freely among the people, and many are subsequently returned filled in by the converts.

"Will you please receive my card, Mr. Fetler?" said a tall fellow whom we met on the Nevsky Prospect one morning. He was a stranger to the evangelist. He had evidently been at one of the meetings, had received blessing, taken the card home, filled it in, and now seized the opportunity of Mr. Fetler's passing by to give it in.

Some strange and sad stories of the difficulties

and dangers encountered by new converts might be told. Two sisters went to the meetings and became converted. On their return home the husband of one of them met them in a violent rage, and brandishing a knife before their faces cried out :

" Why do you try to introduce a new religion into our home ? You are wrecking the peace of our family. I will kill you both ! "

He insisted that his wife should give him a solemn promise that she would discontinue her attendance at the meetings.

" If you will promise me that you will give up drinking vodka I will promise to give up the gospel meetings," said the astute but timorous wife.

The husband was cornered. It was not easy to surrender the vodka. But like a sensible man, after deliberation he gave the required promise, and they came to a mutual agreement.

But God intervened. Their children became ill.

"Shall we ask Pastor Fetler to pray for our little ones ? " she asked her husband timidly one day.

" Yes. How ? Does he pray to God about children ? " he inquired.

His wife explained to him that many requests for prayer were handed in at the meetings, and the people united to pray about the matters as desired.

" Let us go and get them to pray for our sick children," said the husband.

Together they went to Pastor Fetler's meeting and sent up their request, and nothing more was ever heard of the evil of introducing " a new religion " into the home. But the vodka was not readmitted.

" After the foreign manner, Russian corn does not bear fruit," says the Russian poet, Poushkin, in his " Amateur Peasant Girl." But if an ear of wheat from the Kherson steppes, and another the Lincoln fens had been laid side by side the table, it would have puzzled even ushkin to say which was which. Human arts are more alike than ears of corn ; and the records of saving grace bear a striking family likeness, from whatever quarter of the world they come.

One of the most interesting and useful of Mr. Fetler's meetings is the Tuesday evening Bible School, originally held in the ball-room of the palace of Princess Lieven, a house for many years past associated with evangelical preaching and Gospel meetings. This Bible School attracts about three hundred adults. That is, the room is as full as it is possible for it to be. Mr. Fetler uses the black-board, and the audience follows the lesson with close attention. Many of the listeners will themselves be preachers of the word on the following Sunday, for the rule is, " Let him that heareth say ' come.' " This

grounding in the Scriptures is of the utmost value, and it is a most auspicious sign that it occupies such a prominent place in the St. Petersburg evangelical programme.

"It is abundantly clear that the people love Pastor Fetler very much. Why is it?" This inquiry was addressed to one of the workers.

"Oh, sir," was the reply, "we have been hungry so long, you cannot wonder that we enjoy the feast, now that it is spread for us and we sit down at the table!"

EVANGELICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY

IV

EVANGELICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY

WHEN good Colonel Paschkoff and Count Korff were banished from St. Petersburg and from Russia for their testimony for Christ, they left behind them an evangelical fire that has been smouldering ever since, and is now bursting forth into flames that can be seen throughout the city, and the empire.

The Colonel, prior to his banishment, had purchased a plot of land, and built what were practically mission premises near his own residence in the north-eastern suburb of the city, Viborgskaja. The Gospel light has been shining steadily in that quarter ever since. The house is a kind of temperance café. Above are rooms for a working-women's club. Mission work on social and industrial lines is carried on, under the direction of Madame Paschkoff and her daughters, as in the days of the Colonel. Of course, since the famous manifesto of Easter,

1905, Gospel meetings are a more open and zealously-cultivated feature of their mission programme. A Sunday-school is also held, and is well attended.

There is a work, in some respects similar, carried on in the west of the city, on Vassily Island, by Madame Tchertkoff, the widow of a Russian general, who personally superintends the philanthropic and religious activities that cluster around the premises she herself has built for the weal of the bodies and souls of her Russian fellow citizens.

Then there is the work in Morskaja, in the house of Princess Lieven, in the centre of the city. The ball-room and the white drawing-room have at intervals, for many years, been familiar with the voices of prayer and praise. Whatever becomes of the palace in the future—and its fate is uncertain—it will ever retain an historic interest to Evangelical Christians, as the " place where prayer was wont to be made " in the darkest years of reaction and religious persecution in the Russian Empire. Here have been entertained some of the saintliest men in Europe—George Müller, Lord Radstock, Dr. Baedeker, Reginald Radcliffe, and other like-minded servants of the Lord—who, in these stately apartments, have preached the Word of Life to aristocrat and plebeian without distinction.

The little flock of "Evangelical Christians," as they prefer to call themselves, in St. Petersburg is practically shepherded by Mr. Kargel, a veteran in the King's service, held in honour by all for the quiet and fervent witness of his life to the Gospel he preaches. Mr. Kargel was at one time pastor of the German Baptist Church in the city. He afterwards removed to Poland, to take charge of a Baptist church in that country. Then, at the invitation of Colonel Paschkoff, he returned to St. Petersburg, and has been labouring in that city as opportunity offered and with much circumspection ever since. In addition to the meetings held on the Lord's Day, he is the leader of a well-attended service held every Wednesday evening in Morskaja.

The Episcopalian residents in the city are in the diocese of the Bishop of London; the Congregationalists, including the American Ambassador and his suite, are ministered to in a very comfortable chapel. A veteran in the service of the Lord, in the Congregational ministry in St. Petersburg, is Rev. James Key, who recently celebrated the jubilee of his ministry. His labours have been among the British and American representatives of industry and commerce, of whom there were at one time great numbers in the quarter of the city engaged in shipbuilding and other industrial pursuits. Of

late the English-speaking residents have considerably decreased, owing to political unrest and commercial stagnation. Mr. Key has rendered long and faithful service to the cause of God in Russia.

The Baptists, also, for many years have been represented in the city. But they have laboured under the great disadvantage of not possessing even one building of their own, although they have four churches—the German, Esthonian, Lettish, and Swedish. They have all until recently worshipped in one large room or hall; and Pastor Arndt, the pastor of the German Church, has had his apartments under the same roof. There are, however, many disadvantages in the occupation of hired premises—to say nothing of the serious inconveniences of overcrowding, consequent upon the occupation by four churches of one preaching-room. Pastor Arndt has bravely struggled against many difficulties, and with a fair measure of success, to sustain the Baptist interest among these nationalities in St. Petersburg.

In the year 1907 the Lettish Baptist Church invited Rev. W. Fetler to the pastorate, and it has since enjoyed a period of much prosperity.

It will be remembered, however, that these several churches have had no liberty till recently to evangelise among the Russians. Prior to the

Tsar's manifesto of Easter, 1905, no Russian might leave the Greek Orthodox Church; and, indeed, the Congregational, Episcopal, and other foreign churches that own buildings in the city hold their premises and the permit to worship in them on the precise condition that they shall make no attempt to proselytize among the Greek Orthodox subjects of the Tsar. Hence "missions," Evangelical or otherwise, have been until the last few years unknown.

When this fact is borne in mind, the magnitude of the change that has come upon Russia will be appreciated by Western Christians. With the loosening of the spiritual fetters that have been worn for ages, have come new possibilities for Evangelical enterprises over the land, and particularly among what may be called the "border races." But it must also be remembered that even yet proselytism from the Russian Church is an offence against the law. Although the individual is free to leave the national communion, he who persuades him to do so is yet in peril. Therefore it is scarcely to be wondered at if the broadcast scattering of the Gospel seed is even now upon quite a limited scale. When the Duma has amended the law in this particular, as it is hoped it soon will do, Christian workers in Russia will breathe more freely.

Among the foremost to engage in the evan-

gelistic campaign with their accustomed fervour and enterprise are the Methodists. The Methodist Episcopal Church of America, by its Board of Foreign Missions, has put its hands to a great work among the 130 millions of Russia. The glory of Methodism is that it is a "Revival" Church, and it thinks it sees an opportunity to-day in the dominions of the Tsar. In the summer of 1907, Bishop Burt, the general superintendent of the M.E. Church in Europe, visited St. Petersburg for the purpose of founding a mission in that city. On November 3 the first society was organised; candidates for the work of deaconesses are coming forward for training, and a hopeful movement is progressing under the care of Rev. G. A. Simmons. The Russian meetings (as distinct from the Finnish and Swedish) are held at the residence of the pastor.

Pastor Fetler has entered upon what promises to be a great work among the Russians proper as we have already seen.

A happy feature is the generous and harmonious co-operation of these various Evangelical efforts. It is good and pleasant always when brethren dwell together in unity; but in St. Petersburg, where so great a field is to be reaped for the Lord, this spirit of oneness is doubly desirable.

There is a vigorous Young Men's Christian

Association in St. Petersburg. The secretary is a Lutheran, Pastor H. Ferhmann. It is open to all young men without distinction of creed, but a considerable membership is drawn from the Lutheran churches. It is affiliated with the Y.M.C.A. World Alliance in Geneva.

There is another and even more interesting Y.M.C.A. development authorised by the Holy Synod, the *Miyak* (Lighthouse). It cannot be included among evangelical operations, inasmuch as it is actively supported by the Greek clergy, and exists mainly for young men of the Orthodox faith. The *Miyak* is a most valuable agency. It was founded by the generosity of an American philanthropist, Mr. James Stokes of New York, who has proved a true friend to young men in Paris, Berlin, and other cities. Mr. Franklin Gaylord (formerly of Paris) is secretary. He has shown himself a judicious counsellor and leader of young men. The meetings for prayer and Bible study attract very large attendances. The moral and spiritual tone of the *Miyak* is excellent.

Here are a few testimonies to its value recently received by the Council, from members :

" How easy it is for us young men to plunge into the wickedness of the life which surrounds us, where there is hardly a glimmer of that which is noble and uplifting. Crowded cities are full of temptations. The *Miyak* opens to us a whole

world of bright ideals. . . . The *Miyak* transforms us, hushing all that is unworthy within us and feeding our hungry souls with that which is reasonable, good, and eternal."

"Thanks to the religious talks of the different priests," another wrote, "I have a pretty thorough understanding of Christianity."

"With what joy do I run," is the vivacious confession of a third, "when I hear my sick father say, 'I am better; you may go to your beloved *Miyak*.' I take my cap and run down the stairs fastening my coat as I go."

"*Miyak*, it is my life!" exclaims a fourth. "*Miyak*, the name alone speaks for the building. It is a shelter in time of storm, an escape from the reefs and whirlpools of life, that are so difficult for the young and inexperienced to avoid. . . . I bless the name of him who had the idea to organize the society here!"

This institution will undoubtedly exercise a great influence for good upon hundreds of Russian youths; producing for the empire intelligent, high-minded, devout, and honourable citizens. The work among students will be referred to in a later chapter.

PRESENTING A PETITION FOR A SUNDAY-SCHOOL MEETING

V

PRESENTING A PETITION FOR A SUNDAY-SCHOOL MEETING

"THE city Duma has granted us the great hall of the city for our Sunday-school Demonstration," said Mr. Fetler, one morning, during our stay.

"Another new departure?" I suggested.

"Yes, indeed! An evangelical meeting in the city Duma—think of it! The hall is a splendid building, seating two thousand people."

"What Sunday-schools have you?"

"Eight; including the 'Evangelical Christians,' and the German, Lettish and Russian Baptists. We have fixed the Demonstration for Easter Tuesday if we can get permission."

"Permission!" I echoed. "You have secured the hall: what further permission do you need?"

"To obtain the hall from the city Fathers is the first step," he replied, with a smile. "But

we may not hold a meeting without the consent of the police. I am now going to hand in my petition."

"Your petition!" I again echoed. "What is that?"

"Our application must be sent in as a written petition, bearing a stamp of the value, in this case, of a rouble and a half. My request will then be laid before the Vice-Governor. They are usually most courteous to me."

The house of the Governor of St. Petersburg, the headquarters of the police, is the nerve-centre of information, and the muscle of power in the city. It is quite unlike our "Scotland Yard." Our police are the affable and ready servants of the public—ever willing to aid everybody who needs assistance. In St. Petersburg the police are not the servants of the public, but the masters.

Here, in the Governor's house, is the ear that listens, through ubiquitous agents, to conversations everywhere; here is the eye that penetrates all secrets; here is the will that controls this spacious city of palaces, either by document, or, if need be, by rush and rattle of Cossacks. Civilian St. Petersburg lies enmeshed in a gigantic spider's web.

The scenes in the petitions-office of the Governor's House are to a stranger very interesting. The room is upon the ground floor, but so low is

the ceiling and the apartment is so badly lighted and ventilated that it is difficult to dispel the impression that you are in a dingy basement. There are apartments, lofty, spacious and luxurious in the building, but they are upstairs and reserved for more personal use.

The petitions-office is crowded with a diverse multitude. From a ticket window now and again a name is called, and somebody is surprised and relieved to discover that he is being attended to; otherwise the variegated mob loiters listlessly in the waiting-room hour after hour.

At a long table in the centre of the room several are apparently composing their petitions. Some are in trouble because they have lost their indispensable passport—a common case, and very serious; others have become involved with the authorities over taxation or some breach of the regulations; and others again are pleading for a friend or relative who is most likely lying in some prison ignorant alike of his offence or his accuser. A swarthy son of Caucasia is committing his wishes to paper with obvious difficulty. He is most likely submitting a plan for reaching his far-distant mountain home.

These thronged waiting-rooms, and the more luxurious apartments upstairs, were clearly quite familiar to Mr. Fetler. He appeared to be obliged to spend a large proportion of his time

in waiting upon officials either in the city Duma, or in the Ministry of the Interior, or here in the police headquarters ; and for the most part asking leave to do this or that.

" I must give full particulars," said he, as he sat down to write. They had allowed us to go upstairs to one of the less public ante-rooms. On a sheet of foolscap (stamped) he wrote his modest proposals. There would be about five hundred children at their forthcoming festival, with their parents and friends. It was intended that in the afternoon the children should sing a few hymns, recite portions of Scripture, and hear a short address. This would be followed by a small " sale of work " in aid of foreign missions. The children had made and collected articles for this sale. In the evening a public lecture would be delivered by himself (to a crowded assembly, without a doubt), on the Resurrection of Christ. That was all ! He wrote it all down.

We called the next day to learn the result. After a long wait, a uniformed tchinovnik (official) appeared and pointed out certain irregularities in the composition of the petition. It must be re-written.

Mr. Fetler patiently sat down and, cutting out the stamp (value a rouble and a half), attached it to another form, and began anew.

The day following we called again, but there

was no message for us. On our next visit a tchinovnik desired further explanations.

"What hymns will your children sing? You must furnish us with copies of them. The sale of work, too—we shall require a separate petition for this function."

It is not recorded that they inquired whether the children proposed to expose bombs or dynamite-in-bulk for sale. But the tchinovniks were plainly on their guard against every eventuality, and resolved to bravely face the very worst.

I did not personally see the end of this comedy. But Mr. Fetler's account of it in a private letter is naïve and interesting:

"In spite of my two re-written petitions the authorities were suspicious; and when the last day of preparation for the Festival arrived, and I had no reply, I went to inquire again. The thing was put off again till the Vice-Governor's reception time; but I insisted to the chief secretary that I must have the document of permission at once. Before I went to the Vice-Governor I had gone to God, and asked in faith that He would not let me return without the authorization. So when I insisted upon my having it, the chief secretary began to question.

"'Why do you seek to hold your meeting in the very centre of the city? Why did you ask for the Duma Hall?'

" I explained to him how convenient it was for children coming from all parts of St. Petersburg ; and invited him also to be present. He then handed me my petition, and I went straight up to the Vice-Governor, whom you saw. He was very kind, but asked questions.

" ' Will there not be Greek Church people present ? Could you not sing hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church ? '

" ' It is to be a Protestant meeting,' I answered. ' We shall sing the hymns translated from the English.'

" He then took my petition and wrote on it *Permitted*, and wished me all success. Still the smaller tchinovniks kept me two hours more until I got the permit in black-and-white. I went glad away. The ' Sale of Work ' was permitted also ; and when I had almost lost hope of getting this permit (for the Governor's office was closed for three days on account of the feast of Easter) on Sunday, the secretary of our police personally brought this document to my house. It was all a great success. O Lord, revive us ! "

On another occasion we went to pay respects to the Vice-Governor as visitors from a friendly country.

The process of access to the presence of the Vice-Governor occupied exactly two hours. This time was spent in being passed from the lower

ante-rooms to the upper ; and in being curiously scrutinized by many uniformed gentlemen in the successive apartments through which we passed.

A lady in the party carried in her hand an innocent muff. She was stopped when half way up the stairs by cries of " Moofti, moofti ! " from below.

" You must leave your muff. I will take it down to them," explained Mr. Fetler.

" Why ? " we inquired.

Mr. Fetler smiled. Muffs have been known to conceal deadly revolutionary weapons. No risks are taken in the house of the Governor.

We found the Vice-Governor, M. Lisogorsky, a very courteous and amiable gentleman, who received us with much geniality.

" Have you called upon the Metropolitan Antonius ? " he inquired.

We replied that lack of time, not lack of good will, had prevented our making the necessary arrangements.

It was explained that we were deeply interested in the new liberties enjoyed in Russia in religious matters. This point was pressed home in view of the dictum of Baron Uexküll—" The police in Russia are mightier even than the law."

The Vice-Governor smiled, and assured us he was anxious to do all he could for the Dissenters consistently with the public interests.

"The people who love the Word of God, and live according to its teachings, will give the Government little trouble," we assured him. "There are no dangerous revolutionaries among these people."

He agreed that this was so, as far as they had had experience. "But Russia is not England, and we must be cautious."

"You have betrayed us!" cried Mr. Fetler in English, as we descended the handsome marble staircase.

"How so?" I inquired anxiously.

"The police observed you glancing through a Russian newspaper while waiting for the interview. They challenged me just now as to your being, as I alleged, an English pastor. You should not have disclosed to them that you could read Russian. You aroused alarm instantly."

Our laughter startled the lower stratum of tchinovniks on duty below. Mirth is rarely heard in these regions. The lady received back her guilty-looking muff, we shuffled into our Russian goloshes and passed out.

There is a saying that the three gods most zealously worshipped in Russia are Tchee (cabbage soup), Tchi (tea), and Tchin (rank). Verily the greatest of these is Tchin!

THE WINTER PALACE AND ITS TREASURES

VI

THE WINTER PALACE AND ITS TREASURES

OUR decision to seek permission to visit the Winter Palace and explore its vast magnificence was taken at the conclusion of a preaching-service in the salon of a member of the St. Petersburg aristocracy. By personal invitations scattered broadcast among the friends of the hostess, a considerable assembly, which included several persons of title, had gathered, and I had been invited to address them. An agreeable feature was that everybody present could speak English as fluently as Russian.

"We go to the Winter Palace," said Mr. Fetler.

"We also go with you," responded two others of the company.

As the deep, sweet bells of St. Isaac's Cathedral near by sounded eleven o'clock on the following morning the five of us were on our way to the Imperial abode.

"We had better leave the footpath and walk in the road," said Mr. Fetler, as we approached the first of the sentries. "It may be dangerous otherwise."

We British could see no danger, and continued to approach the palace upon the paved side-walk, the rough cobbles of the street being by no means inviting. We had not proceeded much farther, however, before the loud shouting and peremptory gesticulations of the military in front of us made us halt.

"You must come quickly off into the road," cried our conductor, "or they may fire at you."

We obeyed promptly. It was explained that M. Stolypin, the Russian Premier, occupied a suite of rooms in the palace; and they were careful to prevent the approach of strangers, lest they might be revolutionaries with nefarious designs.

"See! A member of his family is going out for a drive." He pointed to a carriage in waiting at one of the entrances, guarded by a company of soldiers. "It may be his poor crippled daughter, whose feet were blown off by the bomb that was designed to compass her father's destruction."

At the central gateway of the palace Mr. Fetler accosted an officer, and explained that visitors from England would like to see the palace.

"I will at once telephone to the secretary,"

he replied most affably. It should be mentioned that the kindness and courtesy of the officials towards English visitors left nothing to be desired. Always in the city the magical words "from England" brought the genial smile to the face and expressions of cordial good-will to the lips. They were an "open sesame" practically everywhere. It was so here. In a few minutes an officer in resplendent uniform advanced, and, bowing, said hesitatingly:

"I—also—speak—a little—English," adding, "I will—write—for you—an order—at once."

While awaiting its arrival we looked around. The front of the great palace faces a large open space, in the centre of which towers the lofty column on which is the statue of the Tsar Alexander I. The column is the largest of the enormous monoliths for which St. Petersburg is famous. This single block of granite is 84 ft. in height, and weighs about 400 tons. On the far side of the open space, facing the palace, is a semicircle of Government buildings, which, like the palace and all other palaces and Government buildings in the city, are painted a reddish-brown colour, to distinguish them from all other structures in this city of palaces.

What scenes have been enacted within this great space! From under this central archway rode the Empress Catherine II. to place herself

proudly at the head of her army. Here, on that awful Sunday in January 1905, the blood of hundreds of workmen and their women-folk soaked down between these cobble stones. The place looked peaceful and pleasant enough as we viewed it in the bright sunshine.

Space would fail to tell of all the magnificence unfolded to our astonished eyes as we passed from hall to hall through this extraordinary building. There seemed to be no end to its vast reception-rooms, each more splendid than that we had just quitted, until we arrived in the Golden Guest-room, which reminded us of the famous *Galerie des Glaces* in the Palace of Versailles, in that it appeared to have exhausted the resources of wealth and art in its dazzling embellishment. The two halls have, however, nothing else in common.

The Hall of St. George (the patron saint of Russia) was of interest because it was here that the present Tsar opened the first Russian Parliament, in May 1906. Here is the throne upon which he sat on that historic occasion. It is significant of the contrast between the two countries, that in England the monarch goes to the Parliament House, but in Russia the Duma members went to the monarch for the " opening " of their session.

We walked through the halls containing the

gold plates and salt-boxes, the loyal gifts of the provinces to the successive Emperors on their coronation. These are artistically arranged upon the walls. Many of them are of pure gold, exquisitely chased and engraved; others are charming specimens of the enameller's art; and all are of great value. The enormous collection of them fills one with astonishment. It is the custom at the crowning ceremony for representatives of each province to step forward and hand the Tsar a golden plate containing bread, and a golden box containing salt, of which they partake together in token of fealty. The plates and boxes, decorated with the arms of the city or province, remain the property of the Tsar.

We were shown the palace church by a monk. Here also are set forth material treasures of fabulous value and, it must also be admitted, verbal details of valueless fable. Among the latter, a relic prized by the faithful Orthodox is—or was—a sacred tooth. This venerable object was once shown to a lady friend of ours, who lives in the city.

"This," said the ecclesiastic, "is the tooth of Saint Peter and Paul."

"Which?" she inquired.

"Saint Peter and Paul," he repeated, with decision.

"Which of the two—Peter or Paul? It can-

not have grown in both their heads," she asked, with awakening interest.

The monk was greatly embarrassed. He had been all his life so accustomed to associate the two names together (they are almost invariably thus united in Russia) that it had never occurred to him that they were the names of two distinct individuals, and the revelation was like an electric shock.

The relic that particularly struck us was the hand of John the Baptist. It is withered and black, of course, but is one of the most venerated treasures of the church in the palace.

From thence we were conducted to the apartments that were in their associations the most interesting and pathetic of all—the private rooms of the Tsar Alexander II. This Emperor covered his name and his reign with imperishable glory by his emancipation of the twenty-three millions of serfs in 1861. The valet of the deceased monarch was in attendance, and reverently pointed out to our sympathetic eyes the many articles closely associated with his master. Here was the table around which sat the Council of Ministers when the emancipation ukase was discussed; here the chair in which sat the Imperial liberator when he signed the great decree. On the wall of the adjoining library hangs the well-known picture of the three Tsars—Vladimir, who gave

the Russians Christianity ; Peter the Great, who gave them modern civilisation ; and Alexander II., who gave them liberty.

We stepped softly into the next apartment as though we were intruding upon the awful death scene. Hither they carried his poor mangled body—he was still alive—after the cruel bomb had done its horrible work. Here is the simple little bed, his ordinary nightly resting-place, on which they laid him to breathe his soul away. Near by is his writing-table. The articles upon it lie untouched as he left them on going out that morning—his knife, his handkerchief, his pens, and all the rest. Who could behold them unmoved ? Some rulers, by their tyrannies, have earned their tragic fate ; but Alexander II. was an enlightened sovereign, humane, kindly, generous, whose good deeds received an ill requital from inhuman hands.

It is a relief to look out of the palace windows upon the fresh green of the grassy lawns below. Until the advent of the present beloved Tsaritza, the Winter Palace garden was merely a gravelled square. Her Imperial Majesty had the space converted into a garden and turfed, to remind her of her mother's island home, fair England.

We cherish vivid memories of the Winter Palace : its spacious sweeping marble staircases, its sumptuous upholstery, its huge candlesticks

of crystal, its great silver vases, its painted ceilings, its scintillating chandeliers, its great galleries of Royal portraits, its stateliness and elegance of adornment in gold and silver and artistic embroideries and tapestries, its columns and cornices and furnishings of malachite, and jasper, and lapis lazuli, and multi-coloured marbles, and ivory; its wealth of every kind of rare carved, polished, and inlaid wood-work; its lovely pavement of mosaics brought from Pompeii; its brilliant mirrors; the fountains and palms of its beautiful conservatories; its endless galleries of pomp and luxury; and the dignity of its innumerable magnificently uniformed men-servants. Here, surely, is an earthly paradise! To possess all this is indeed the zenith of mortal happiness.

But, alas for human greatness! What a mockery it is! The Tsar has not resided in this superb palace of his, except perhaps for one night or so, since May 1906; nor is it considered quite safe for him to come even to look at it, as we have done.

DUMA MEMBERS ASK QUESTIONS

VII

DUMA MEMBERS ASK QUESTIONS

"WE who are here are all members of the Greek Orthodox Church," said Professor ——, of the St. Petersburg University, one of the first authorities in Europe in his own department of science. "The majority of the members of the Duma are, of course, of the national faith."

"And yet you advocate religious liberty?"

"Certainly we do. We stand for the freedom of the individual in matters of religion. For my own part, the older I become the more devoted I am to my own Church."

The Tsar's Manifesto of Easter 1905 is still before the Duma with the object of shaping it into a statute of the realm. The Committee of Religions of the Duma is deliberating upon its details, as these affect the Old Believers, Roman Catholics and other "sectants." Those members of the Left who are in favour of the enlargement and strengthening of its provisions have held several meetings to confer upon their line of

action in Committee and in the Duma. In the former they may have a struggle ; in the Duma they confidently anticipate a substantial majority in favour of an enlightened and progressive measure.

"About ten days ago," said President ——, "the matter was discussed in the Duma Grand Committee, when our views were carried by a majority of the votes. The Roman Catholics were, of course, in favour of freedom, as their religion, like all foreign religions, is only tolerated ; but even some of our Greek Church priests voted with us, which is a most encouraging sign."

Another informal meeting was recently called, and Rev. W. Fetler had been invited to attend. By the courtesy of the president and the other gentlemen present, the writer was introduced as an English Free Church minister who could give information that might be useful to them as to the conditions of religious liberty prevailing in Great Britain and the United States of America.

"Russia is not England, you know," said one member, with a smile. "We must be satisfied to go slowly."

The room was spacious and well upholstered. On the broad table were pens, ink, and paper. The waiters who, at a later hour, brought in the glasses of tea and sliced lemon, stepped noiselessly upon the thick carpet.

President —— courteously offered his cigar-case, and then, lighting a cigarette, plunged into the matter in hand.

It was explained that the Manifesto of 1905 had granted to the Russian the long-desired boon of liberty to change his religion if he so desired. For centuries every Russian by his birth became a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, and to forsake it was the direst offence he could commit against the State—an offence which exposed him to terrible pains and penalties. "Foreign religions" had been specifically provided for. The administration under which they are protected has long been a department of the Ministry of the Interior. But "foreign religions" were only the privilege (or pitiable fate) of the foreign races that owned allegiance to the Russian throne. The German might be a Lutheran; the Pole, a Romanist; the Armenian and the Tartar, the Tcherkess and the Grusian and all the rest, had liberty to follow their ancestral faiths. Even the Jew—with disabilities the recital of which brings the crimson to the cheek—might remain a Jew. But the Russian must be a Greek Orthodox, and nothing else, for ever and ever—except an atheist, or a hypocrite; there is no statute prohibiting these variations, and consequently they are common.

By his famous Manifesto of Easter 1905 the

Tsar had conceded liberty to change his faith even to the Greek Orthodox! The Most Holy Governing Synod gnashed its venerable teeth, but the terror of revolution was stalking through the land, and even Pobiedonostzeff was powerless.

One point, however, had been reserved, and around this the battle of the Duma has yet to be fought. The Russian is free to change his faith, *but he who is guilty of persuading him to do so is liable to the severest punishments.*

On this point the Left are concentrating for a vigorous and, it is hoped, a victorious struggle. As loyal Russians they would desire to give a generous and complete interpretation to the expressed will of His Majesty the Tsar, and thus bring the greater honour to the throne and the larger blessing to the nation.

"Would you kindly tell us—it will help us," said a member of the Duma, "what are the regulations and laws in England under which a man may leave one Church and become a member of another? We should like to know, too, the principle of your laws respecting liberty to build places of worship, and to make converts to faiths other than that established by the State. Are there books available containing the regulations on these points? If so, could you supply us with a few copies?"

The writer could, at the moment, recall no

'sh literature on these matters, except per-
he letters of Dr. Clifford and the speeches
bishops and others on Education Acts and
public questions.

principle in England is, 'Hands off, in
conscience!' The State concerns itself with civil affairs, and leaves spiritual interests to the individual conscience. We have no regulations respecting a change of faith."

"Does the convert pay no fine, incur no penalty?"

"Not at all. A man is at liberty to unite with another Church whenever he thinks it will be to his advantage to do so."

"But his change of religion must be registered, of course, by the police?"

"No. The police have nothing to do with it. Each Church registers its own members. If they do not, the State does not concern itself."

"The Government controls the building of new churches?"

"We are free to build as many as we need, if we can find sites and money for them. The ability to find the money is not always considered a prerequisite."

This sally was lost upon the grave inquirers. I am not sure that Mr. Fetler translated it.

"May a person attempt to turn another from his faith?"

"Yes; it is done every day."

"Without incurring penalties?"

"Certainly."

"But if he be a member of the Anglican Church —your Established Church?"

"It does not make any difference. With us attachment to a Church—even the State Church —is purely voluntary. The people unite themselves to it, and remain in it, because it helps them spiritually and they love it. There is no other bond."

"But your King must remain a member of the National Church?"

"Yes. This is at present one of the vital conditions on which he holds the crown of Great Britain. The object is to secure that he shall not be a Roman Catholic. British citizens dread the domination of Rome. We have had bitter experience of what that means in past generations. Another condition is that he shall reside in the country he governs. He might leave England, and come here to Petersburg to live. In that case he must surrender the crown. He might leave Anglicanism and become, like myself, a Baptist, if his conscience troubled him on the doctrinal points involved. But he would also in that case yield up the crown. You see, both monarch and subjects are as perfectly free as to their faith as they are as to their place of residence."

"Your English Government—the Ministers—are, of course, Anglicans?"

"By no means. Perhaps the majority are, but it is not essential. As a matter of fact, high office in the Cabinet is held by a Baptist."

"By a Baptist! What is his name?"

"Mr. Lloyd George. You have heard of him. He is a Dissenter. There are others in the British Ministry. Religious tests are old-fashioned and pernicious. We have long ago given them up."

"Your country once had restrictive laws in matters of religion?"

"Oh yes, plenty of them—cruel laws. The reigns of the Stuart kings are an abhorrent memory to the British people on that account. But that is long past."

"Another question. You have open-air religious meetings even in your towns—under what restrictions?"

"There is only one that I know of—there must be no obstruction of the thoroughfare. Roads were made for transit. If you keep a free passage, you may preach what religion you please out of doors."

These replies were listened to with an interest that was pathetic in its keenness. Conversation then turned to the divergent parties in the Church of England, and to the various questions at issue

between English denominations, and kindred subjects.

"We of the Western nations are looking with most sympathetic eyes upon this struggle for freedom of conscience here in Russia. And to you, the front-rank fighters for this vital reform in the States Duma, with all our hearts we wish 'God-speed!'"

It was with feelings of profound respect for these Russian gentlemen, and high appreciation of their courage and fidelity to noble ideals in a conflict beset with grave difficulties and possibly not without personal peril, that, hearing the chiming of the bells of a neighbouring church, we hurriedly took our leave and passed out into the clear frosty air of the St. Petersburg midnight.

IN THE GREAT HALL OF NOBEL

VIII

IN THE GREAT HALL OF NOBEL

ABOUT ten years ago Herr Nobel, whose fame is world-wide as the donor of the Nobel Prize, bestowed annually upon the distinguished individual who has rendered conspicuous service in the interests of international peace, built a hall in Viborgskaja, St. Petersburg.

Herr Nobel's works are in close proximity, and his object appears to have been to provide a place to which the workmen and their neighbours might resort to listen to good music or popular scientific or literary lectures and for similar purposes.

The Hall, a handsome building, is approached by a stately flight of steps. A commodious platform is flanked by ante-rooms ; and underneath the main hall are suites of rooms which are used as an Institute, cloak-rooms, restaurant, caretaker's rooms, etc.

It is hardly possible for us to realise that populous and luxurious St. Petersburg is a city almost

destitute of halls suitable for public meetings. There is a prodigality of palaces. The stately quays of the Neva and the banks of the canals are lined with them. Now and again there is one "on the market," which may be picked up at anything above two million roubles. There are churches innumerable; their cupolas, brightly coloured or of burnished copper, flash in the clear sunshine in every quarter of the city, and shame the Londoner by the contrast which their beauty presents to the griminess of our places of worship. There are theatres, too, and concert-halls. There are military establishments and great Government buildings in their invariable dull red colour, the official tint. But the ordinary public assembly room, so familiar and indispensable in our free Western life, as far as a visitor of an inquiring mind was able to discover, is practically non-existent. If, reader, you doubt it, tramp St. Petersburg for weeks, as Mr. Fetler has done, in search of one, or search the public press for an advertisement of such a place "to be let," and you will be convinced of their rarity.

During the months of political storm that followed the Russo-Japanese war, the men of Herr Nobel's works had to dispense with their lectures, concerts, and other proposed intellectual and social recreations. Such gatherings would undoubtedly have given opportunity for revo-

lutionary propaganda. The authorities forbad them as dangerous. On the other hand, MM. de Plehve and Trepoff, the latter a man who is said to have been sadly misjudged, appear to have considered that in a religious revival, even though on non-Orthodox lines, might be found an outlet for popular passions, then rising almost to frenzy in political matters. At all events, secret hints were conveyed to the Evangelicals that an application for permission to hold Gospel meetings would be more than favourably considered by the police. With alacrity Christian friends in the city sought and obtained the consent of Herr Nobel to the holding of evangelistic services in his hall. The place was inconveniently located, being on the northern border of the city, and not too easily accessible; otherwise it was just the building needed for such a purpose.

"It will be essential," said the responsible tchinovnik when issuing the police permit, "that a small body of military under arms shall be present in the hall during your meeting; and that upon its termination the people shall rapidly and quietly leave the hall and disperse—this for their own safety."

The presence of the military was an unpleasant condition to the pacific organizers of the meetings, but the utmost modification of it that they could secure was that the soldiers might be placed in

one of the rooms from which they could overhear all that was said, and keep an eye upon the assembly, without being themselves objects of distraction.

"You do not know the neighbourhood or the people as well as we do," said the official. "We will run no risks of revolutionary speeches or disorder."

Accordingly the evangelistic campaign was begun in that hall that has continued intermittently ever since. The first meeting was a season of intense emotion. The great multitude that flocked to hear the Word quite forgot that there was a squad of soldiers, with loaded rifles and swords to belt, secreted in the ante-rooms at the rear. Was ever a Gospel meeting held under such circumstances?

Subsequent services were held in the same building, and the authorities having become assured of the pacific character of the assembled crowds and the spiritual tone of the meetings, withdrew the soldiers and contented themselves with policemen. Even these dwindled away to one or two, who were prepared to telephone for help if need arose—which, of course, it never did.

The rarity, nay, rather the bold originality of the idea of Gospel preaching for the masses caused the editor of the *Petersbourgsky Listok*, one of the city dailies, to send a pressman to

write up the proceedings. He furnished a six-column description of one of Mr. Fetler's earliest meetings to his paper. British readers will be interested in a few brief extracts.

"At eight o'clock the Great Hall of Nobel was crowded with all kinds of people. It was much remarked that there was an absence of all manner of holy pictures. With a special interest the congregation awaited the appearance upon the platform of the preacher.

"'See, there he comes!'

"He sat down in quiet thoughtfulness behind the table, covering his face with his hands. Some strained minutes were passed.

"'Friends, let us sing number first, from *The Favourite Hymns*.' (*The Favourite Hymns* is a compilation made by Colonel Paschkoff twenty-five years ago. When the Colonel was banished for life from Russia and the meetings were broken up, the hymnbooks were stored away for more auspicious times.)

"The singing of 'Tell me the old, old story' was spirited and melodious. Above the platform, where stands the preacher flanked by his two choirs, extends a white scroll, upon which were the words, 'We preach Christ crucified.' The two choirs are those of the Evangelical Christians and of the Baptists."

The reporter was much impressed by an allu-

sion in Mr. Fetler's address to the local tramways for purposes of illustration. The association of such a mundane and secular matter with "Golgotha and the Cross" approximated to irreverence in his judgment.

"At last the preacher with much animation exclaimed, 'We also are revolutionists!' Then followed a pause. But of course this was only an exhibition of the arts of the orator. 'Yes, we are revolutionists!' (The police present did not raise their rifles to fire, awaiting apparently further developments). 'We are revolutionists against the tyranny of sin and Satan. We wage war against drink, deceit, the devil, and death.' The atheists of to-day Mr. Fetler compared to the swine under the oak-tree, in the fable, who ate the acorns and began to uproot the tree."

"At the close he expressed the earnest desire that the States Duma should, at the earliest moment, grant the fullest liberty of conscience in Russia."

Recently the same newspaper published a very informing interview with one of the Greek Church missionaries named Bogouloboff. This gentleman is employed by the Orthodox authorities for the purpose of holding public debates, particularly in the rural districts, with non-Orthodox religious leaders. He also promotes

"anti-sectant meetings," in which seceders from the Greek Church are denounced and heretical doctrines refuted. He is credited with considerable debating ability, and is regarded as a champion of Orthodoxy. Says Bogouloboff:

"Sectantism is spreading in Petersburg more and more by widely different methods. Their proselytism prevails on the one side by their persistence, and on the other by their cunning methods of propaganda. As an example of my words I can give you this fact illustrating, from everyday life. About three days ago a woman took her seat by me in the tram-car, and at once began to speak to me about religion! The public in the car immediately directed their attention to our conversation. She was a sectant. Cases like this are not infrequent, and show how persistent they are. These voluntary and authorised propagandists of various sects—there is no counting them—are always seeking an opportunity to speak with whomsoever they may find, and succeed in gaining everywhere and at all times adherents to their beliefs."

"What do you think," inquired the interviewer, "is the chief aim of the sectant propaganda of the day?"

"The following," was Bogouloboff's reply. "To prepare in Russia the way for a church reformation movement. To this end the sectants

hold their meetings for outsiders, 'to call to Christ.' To refute them we arrange missionary lectures, which are given under my direction."

"Where is the chief place of residence of these sectants?"

"In North America, England, and Hamburg. The latter place is especially the sower of Baptist and various other seeds of evil tendencies," was the reply.

For a considerable period these evangelistic meetings were held weekly, on Monday evenings, in the Hall of Nobel. They were always popular. The writer was privileged to preach at one of the services, Baroness von Cruze, a friend of the late Colonel Paschkoff, interpreting into Russian.

Over the platform facing the audience is a full-length oil-painting of Herr Nobel; and to the left hangs a portrait of the Tsar—the latter a feature of probably every public room of every city of the Empire. The hall is lighted by electricity; and the scene as viewed from the platform was inspiring. The people pressed to the front for seats, until every chair on the platform not already occupied was transferred to the aisles of the hall. There appeared to be no vacant place anywhere. There were some fine intellectual heads in the audience, and here and there a rugged bearded face strikingly suggestive of Tolstoy.

At the call of Mr. Fetler, young men, working

men, arose here and there in the meeting to read out a verse of a hymn. The two choirs, Evangelical Christians and Baptists, led the singing, and rendered two anthems in the course of the service.

In prayer all the people knelt; and plaintive pathetic murmurings and pleadings that brought the tears to one's eyes arose everywhere through the hall. They who were inwardly impelled to do so, prayed aloud, and prayers were heard in all directions. They were invariably brief, and never noisy. It was deeply affecting.

An inquiry meeting followed, to which a large number remained for spiritual guidance and aid.

Not always are Gospel services permitted to pass without hostile interruption. When the enemies of the truth are present, as at times they are, the utmost circumspection and patience are needed to avoid giving cause for offence either by word or deed.

Rev. F. Arndt describes such an occasion in a recent St. Petersburg meeting.

"Where are the ikons? We have come here to pray. We want an ikon!" exclaimed a number of men who had clearly come to the meeting to create a disturbance. There were a dozen or more of them.

"Let us see your ikons. How can we say our prayers without them?"

"We do not pray here after that manner," said the pastor pacifically.

"You have opened this place for worship," protested the intruders. "But where are the holy pictures of the saints?"

"If you desire to pray to ikons," replied he, "you can do so in your own church or at home. We have no ikons in our meetings."

"You do not reverence the holy pictures. You are blasphemers!"

Then they came forward angrily and began an outburst of abuse and threatenings. The assembly became excited. In the uproar women and girls cried out, and some fainted. There was no alternative but to discontinue the service and urge the people to go quickly and quietly home. Disturbance in the building would have probably resulted in the temporary closing of the hall.

Such scenes are happily exceptional in St. Petersburg. It has not been uncommon of late for the police to assist in the orderly arrangement of the larger gatherings, when the roadways have been blocked with people, and the doors of the hall have had to be closed some time before the commencement of the proceedings, the building being as full as it could hold. This has especially been the case at the hall of the City Duma on the Nevsky Prospect.

PERILS AND TRAGEDIES OF STUDENT LIFE

IX

PERILS AND TRAGEDIES OF STUDENT LIFE

EVERY young Russian who hopes to make anything of himself and his future must of necessity have a University education. It is the rule of the empire. A man cannot even become a station-master on an out-of-the-way provincial line without his University credentials. Hence the youth of Russia flocks to the great cities, to the gates of Opportunity.

"Who is that young fellow in uniform at the next table? He looks to be rather important," one of our party inquired of Mr. Fetler as we sat together at dinner in a restaurant on Nevsky Prospect.

"Only a University student. They must all wear a uniform to distinguish them," was the reply.

The University uniform was not at all showy, but it was to be seen everywhere in the city—

at the meetings of Mr. Fetler, in the public streets, on the river ferry-boats, among the innumerable little shops of the Gostinnoi Dvor, in the attractive avenues of the Summer Gardens or the Catharineschoff, where the inhabitants enjoy much of their leisure. The wearing of the uniform is compulsory. Indeed, nearly everybody wears a uniform of some kind. But a stranger may easily be mistaken as to the relative importance of the wearers. For example, yonder dignitary in the brilliant crimson cape is neither a governor-general nor a grand duke, but an ordinary lackey; and he in the bright green coat who passes you in the throng on the footpath, and condescends to give you a deferential salute, is only a distributor of handbills.

The student-life of the vast city on the Neva is a wide, wide field, all white and waiting, of opportunity for Christian self-denying service. There are about thirty thousand young students in this city alone belonging to the University and the various gymnasia—twenty-one thousand men and nearly nine thousand girls—and of these some twelve thousand are in the University.

The need of these young people for the guiding light of Gospel truth and precept, and the helpful grace of Christian friendliness and love, is so great as to be positively tragic. The perils of life in great centres of population to the moral

and spiritual interests of youth are in general familiar to Christian philanthropists everywhere ; but surely nowhere are those perils so inevitable and so terrible as to the student-youth of the Russian cities.

Speaking broadly, the revolutionary dreams of a sudden millennium through immediate and violent political changes, dreams that filled with rosy hopes many thousands of young student hearts in the earlier years of this century, have died away. The political ideals so enthusiastically cherished and propagated, have been shattered by the remorselessly slow and even processes of present-day history. And now there has sprung up in their stead, and perhaps as their inevitable fruit, a blunt and coarse atheistic quasi-philosophy such as that which Paul alluded to in the expression, " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

" We have discovered that it is impossible to fashion the world according to our ideals," they say in effect. " Let us yield ourselves to such gratifications as it may afford to us. Self-denial is folly. Self-indulgence alone is wisdom. Good and evil are only popular superstitions. Let us fling them aside, and please ourselves as far as we may and as long as we can, and then—eternal silence ! "

This degrading and destructive rule of life is

fed and fostered by the abundant publication of cheap reprints of the ordinary infidel writings of Western nations, which are widely read among the student class, at the age when the mind is most impressionable and most receptive to new ideas.

Many of the women-students appear to be even more intoxicated with this philosophy of hell than the young men. You meet them in the streets, following in the wake of their young men lovers (with whom in many cases they live as though married), their white faces animated with smiles that are almost ghastly. You may encounter them also in the public restaurants, taking their meals together.

An idea of the extent to which the sacred institutions of Christian marriage and the home have already become undermined in the regard of Russia's young womanhood, may be gained from the following resolution, which was adopted as recently as December 1909 at a meeting of women in the city of St. Petersburg :

" Considering that the contemporary form of marriage does not satisfy the ripened understanding and needs of society, and finding that unions outside marriage cast a serious reflection on the children, the meeting is in favour of the following changes and additions to the civil law :

" (1) To enlarge the number of reasons for the

dissolution of marriage on a basis of equal rights for both sides.

. . . . .

"(4) To broaden the rights of children born out of marriage; to extend their rights of inheritance not only to the acquired property of the mother, but also to the entailed property, and to strengthen the bond between a child born out of marriage with its father, by a number of changes and additions to the existing law."

The suggestion of "free unions" found a great support in the meeting; one young person going so far as to declare, amid the hearty applause of many present, that there was only one objection to "free unions between men and women,"—that certain legal disadvantages followed to the children. Another declared that marriage was "a prison."

These women appear to have been utterly oblivious of the two facts: (1) that by the destruction of the marriage tie womankind would be from first to last the sufferers and losers; and (2) that to the Divine Founder of the Christian faith womanhood owes all that is to-day most precious to her, including her queenship in the sacred domain of the home.

The bitter fruits of these atheistic views of life and responsibility and morals are apparent. The

enormous "Home for Illegitimate Children Foundlings" contains the population of a small town, covers about thirty acres of land in the heart of St. Petersburg, and is sustained by considerable endowments and donations. This institution, while on the one hand an exhibition of the virtue of charity, is on the other a revelation of the appalling extent to which the canker of vice and immorality has eaten its shameful way into the young life of the community. A daily stream of infants—"from twenty to twenty-five," one authority says—is received at its doors, "and no questions are asked." We have it on the word of Count Leon Tolstoy that about the same number are admitted into the "Home for Illegitimate Children" in Moscow. Between seven and eight hundred wet-nurses are always kept busy in the Petersburg "Home." It is, indeed, a very grave question whether these well-meant institutions are not productive of vastly more harm than good. While it may readily be conceded that the great majority of these unwanted babies come from classes other than "the intelligentia," the fact that close at hand are such easy facilities for escaping the consequences of evil-living cannot be other than demoralising in its effects upon the tremendous aggregation of young life of both sexes gathered to the city for purposes of study, and (in the case of students from

other parts) knowing nothing of the restraints of ordinary family life.

There are other fruits of the youthful atheism of the city. A group of young women students have entered into a solemn covenant with each other to commit suicide within a given term of years, and until the moment of their death to "enjoy" their lives to the utmost extent, irrespective of moral or any other considerations. The beautiful blue waters of the Neva yield up more bodies of suicides than any other river in the world!

This shocking condition of things weighs like an awful nightmare upon many Christian and compassionate hearts; and efforts are now being made as never before to reach the students *as a class* with the Gospel. Until the end of the year 1905 such efforts were impossible because illegal.

Naturally the majority of the students are Russians. There is a sprinkling of German, Lettish, Esthonian, Polish, and Jewish students, but the Russians are in overwhelming numbers. As we have seen, prior to the Manifesto of 1905 it was a penal offence for a Russian to change his "faith." These men and girls might freely become moral lepers, social wreckage, infidels open and scornful, so long as they paid the formal homage at the traditional shrines; but to become a convert to Rome, or to Judaism, or to

Lutheranism, or to a "foreign religion" of any kind, was an offence for which severe penalties were provided. It is indeed doubtful even now whether any attempt to win the Russian student to evangelical truth is not punishable.

Rev. W. Fetler introduced us to Baron Nicolay, than whom the St. Petersburg students have no truer friend and well-wisher. The baron is a Lutheran, who serves his God by compassionately caring for these wandering sheep. Our conversation was all upon this theme.

"We admit no responsibility on our part for anybody's change of faith," said Baron Nicolay. "It is our duty to declare the truth as we know it. Their spiritual decisions are their own affairs, and they are legally free to make them. If they should give evidence by holiness of life of a change of heart, we are of course thankful to God; but we stand clear of responsibility for any change of creed. We impress on the convert that such a matter is his or her own free act. Mere change of creed or nominal religion is not at all what we aim at, but deliverance from sin and death."

"And have you found among the students a willingness to hear the Word?"

"Yes; we believe there is an increasing disposition. But atheism and a brand of socialism intolerant and defiant have a tenacious hold on these young people."

" Where do you invite them—for meetings ? "

" I gather as many as I can, and as frequently as I can, to my own rooms. Here we read the Word, and converse and pray together. There is a hopeful and increasing group of believing students who will, we trust, be the salt in the University life of the city."

" Any other meetings ? "

" Yes. Miss Ruth Rouse, the Women's Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation, has held meetings for women students here and in Moscow. We arranged the first meetings in fear and trembling, wondering would twenty girls come ? Those meetings covered a period of three weeks ; and upwards of three hundred students applied eagerly for tickets in this city, and in Moscow about twelve hundred ! "

Baron Nicolay mentioned also the interesting case of a Moscow Professor of Political Economy of atheistical views, Professor Bulgakoff, a member of the second Duma, who paid a visit to England expecting to find religion extinct in this country. What he saw astonished and bitterly disappointed him. He has since given encouraging signs, not only of change of " views," but also of change of heart. He is now industriously striving for the souls of the students of both capitals, Moscow and Petersburg ; and his voluntary lectures on religio-scientific subjects

(somewhat after the manner of the late Professor Drummond) are attracting much attention and producing most favourable results among the students.

"We are always on the look-out for opportunities of helping our students; and God is giving them to us," said the baron. "They are worth the winning for Christ. They make heroic disciples. The young Russian flings himself unreservedly upon the altar of his faith. He asks, 'What have we to do? What may we sacrifice for our cause? We are quite ready to do or to suffer for that which fills our heart!'"

Baron Nicolay referred to one case among many: a young woman-student who gave out of her living of fifty shillings a month, no less than twenty shillings monthly to her Social Democratic party.

"You will hardly anywhere find," said he, "a more warm-hearted, generous, unselfish class of people when you have once won their affections."

THE DEFILEMENT OF HOLY MOSCOW

X

THE DEFILEMENT OF HOLY MOSCOW

"YOUR London is very like Moscow," remarked a French professor visiting London, recently. "I have lived in Moscow. It is just the same. For the leetle low houses of red breeks or painted white and the gardens everywhere; for the broad roads, so long; yes, and for the tea also—always tea! The city is so wide, and the factories and the beautiful shops. It is the same Greek style which you build, the Bank of England, and the National Gallery, the public houses——"

"Public buildings."

"Yes, you say public buildings—they are not houses. Also your venerable cathedrals and abbeys and Government buildings—right in the meedle of the city. It is not Paris nor Berlin. It is Moscow—yes!"

"But our roadways are not oceans of mud in wet weather, with planks placed over the worst holes to enable the inhabitants to leave their dwellings."

"Oh no; your streets are clean—very clean. But your houses are in the fronts very dirty. In Moscow they are painted and bright. The air is clear—no soot. It is a city of many colours."

Moscow from the Sparrow Hills, or from the Ivan Velika tower in the centre, presents an incomparable view. It is considered to be, when thus seen, one of the fairest cities upon the face of the earth, inspiring in the hearts of the Orthodox not only admiration but veneration as their sacred city, the metropolis of the faith, the centre of Christendom. The many-coloured houses, walls and gables brightly painted, red or yellow, blue or white, with the green roofs; the tall towers; the domes and cupolas of the countless churches coloured or brightly burnished; the gardens, and the interminable brown roads, together make up an attractive picture. In the heart of it is the famous Kremlin—palace, fortress, and cluster of cathedrals, all in one, with its long lines of red encircling walls, its towers and glittering domes.

This view of the ancient city from the Sparrow Hills Napoleon and his army took ere the leaping flames consumed their prize before their astonished gaze, thereby condemning them to retreat baffled and broken upon that frightful winter journey homeward which destroyed the flower of the arms of France.

In this city, containing a population of about a million and a half souls, a tiny Gospel light has twinkled for many years. A small company of faithful believers was in the habit of meeting together each week for prayer and the study of the Word of God. Five or six years ago its numbers were recruited by the arrival of brethren from other cities, and on the promulgation of the Imperial ukase granting religious liberty, in the year 1905, the open preaching of the Gospel was undertaken in earnest. An upstair room was hired near the Kremlin, which held when packed about two hundred and fifty persons. The rent was heavy—three thousand roubles per annum. The room was much too small and the rent much too large; but the members cheerfully denied themselves, making many sacrifices and untiring efforts to give and collect the money. Soon the membership roll contained one hundred and fifty names, while hundreds besides hovered around attending the services, many eager for the light, all pathetically interested.

The Swedish committee for the *Evangelisk Mission i Russland* sent Mr. Johannes Svensson from Stockholm to labour in Moscow in 1908. His report of the spiritual darkness of the people is sad reading.

"Do you ever read the Bible?" he inquired of a priest of the Orthodox Church.

"Am I a deacon, that I should need to read the Bible?" was the indignant reply of the offended ecclesiastic.

It is the inferior clergy—the deacons—who perform the office of the reading of the Scriptures in the Greek Churches. The ancient Slavonic language in which they are read is an unknown tongue to the multitudes who are reverently standing to hear the service. But the deep rich musical voices of the deacons as they read can never be forgotten by those who hear them for the first time. Evidently many of the clergy attach no importance whatever to the contents of the volume, the reading of which they contemptuously delegate to their subordinates. "Like priests like people."

"The people live in darkness and sin as fishes do in water," said Mr. Svensson. "They do not read God's Word. They kiss the Gospel every Sunday in church. They love and honour it, but do not know what is written there. The reading of the Bible is allowed; but the need therefor has not been awakened. That is a work for the future."

A vivid description of one of these 1908 services was given by Mr. Henry Deacon, an English visitor who was present.

"We pass under an arch, and ascend with others the stairs. The usual racks for shubas,

goloshes and hats, are full. We pass into a room benched by forms, and see at the farther end a long table, a few chairs and a harmonium. The benches are all occupied, and the walls are lined by standers. The leader is a man with prominent brow and dark spectacled eyes, who has the air and look of a professor. By his side is a converted Jew, John Vertitzky, who eight years ago received the Lord Jesus. He and his wife are glowing disciples, and as some days ago I descended the stairway from his lodging, he shouted from the banisters, 'Im Himmel we shall speak freely!'

"While the last speaker was on his feet there were several attempts to turn a key in a door behind. At length a head was angrily thrust in and impatiently withdrawn. The intruder meant to signify that our time was up. And scarcely had the benediction been pronounced when, in the midst of the mutual farewells of the congregation, a partition was removed, and we saw the scenery arranged upon a stage for the first act of a play."

When red revolution raged in these wide Moscow thoroughfares in the awful winter of 1905, and desperate encounters between the military and the mob of workmen were of almost daily occurrence, when soldiers sat in these church belfries and fired at the pedestrians in the streets

below, the workmen built high barriers of snow across the roadways and poured pails of water over the white masses, which, rapidly freezing, formed ramparts of solid ice against the advance of the terrible Cossacks. Notwithstanding a widespread awakening in Russia, there are yet ramparts of icy apathy and enmity to be scaled by the heroic soldiers of the cross of Christ.

The abortive revolution has put hindrances in the path of Gospel progress. The fiery enthusiasm of the Russian youth ran with incredible impetuosity into political channels ; the tchinovniks are consequently very suspicious of all assemblies and conferences.

A number of the University lady-students, who were blessed by the Gospel message, approached the Rector and asked him for permission to gather Moscow children and teach them the Word of God. Being personally a liberal-minded man, he readily granted their request. The little Evangelical community were overjoyed at the prospect of the establishment of a Sunday-school, and began to look around for a suitable building for the purpose. After much inquiry they had the offer of a theatre for two hours at a time at a rent of fifteen roubles (30s.) for each use of the place.

" Where shall we get the means for such a rent ? " they inquired in dismay.

Their perplexities, however, were summarily ended by the withdrawal of the permission to the thirty lady students to teach, in consequence of political unrest in the University.

In the following year Rev. W. Fetler arrived in Moscow, not to build on the foundations already laid, but to begin a new work for Christ in another quarter of the city. It had been Mr. Fetler's original intention to begin his evangelistic campaign in Russia in Moscow, in the heart of the empire. But he had been detained in St. Petersburg when on his way thither, and almost ere he was aware of it, found himself in the midst of a great work in the capital city, the claims of which upon his personal attention would take no denial. He was a happy man when the St. Petersburg work, both among the Letts, his own people, and the Russians, was placed upon such a permanent basis, and had produced such capable leaders and teachers that he was able for a few weeks to leave it and proceed to the more needy city. The fact that Mr. Fetler is a Lett, and therefore by heredity a non-Orthodox—the Letts as a people are Lutheran—has placed him on a good vantage ground in preaching the Gospel in Russia. If he had been a true Russian by birth, he would have been looked upon as a traitor to his hereditary faith, and his public appearances on Evangelical platforms would probably have

excited much greater hostility, particularly from the Greek Church.

The multitudes flocked to his hired hall to hear him preach. The newspapers gave long and graphic accounts of the services, sometimes appreciative but hostile for the most part. Here is a specimen :

" Orthodox Christians, what is being done in our Holy Russia ? What is happening in our Mother Moscow, the white-stone city ? From far-off lands, from seas of the enemy, an unseen army has come upon us—to make war against our holy faith. . . . The enemy remembers that in the twelfth year of the last century (*i.e.* 1812, the invasion of Napoleon) he could not break the Russian might, but was himself broken on the Rock Christ—that is, the Holy Orthodox Church. And the enemy knows he cannot break the Russian might if in the future also our people will have strong faith in Christ—if Moscow, the heart of Russia, in the coming years also will be faithful to the Holy Orthodox Church.

" See, then, on the street of Pokroff, which is so called from the Pokroff shrine of the Most Holy Mother of God, is an inimical camp. Ah ! it is not faith that Fetler is after. He wants to break in pieces in Orthodox people their faith in Christ in order that after that he may destroy

the Russian land itself! . . . Wake up, then, O ye Orthodox, from your perilous dream! Quench these diabolic arrows of these Fetlers and Perks. Think well into what an abyss you are being drawn by these servants of antichrist. Be not deceived when they quote Gospel texts. Satan also, when tempting Christ, quoted Holy Scripture. But the Lord replied, 'Go thou behind Me, Satan!' Oh! brethren, preserve the holy faith and the Orthodox Church above everything!"

After a time the Governor of the city issued orders that the meetings were to cease, and the police closed the hall. But the pastor went to St. Petersburg, and complained of the action of the local authorities, showing his licence as an accredited pastor and the registration certificate of the newly-formed church in Moscow. In consequence, the prohibition was withdrawn and the meetings resumed. Some idea of the excitement occasioned in the city by these events, and by the meetings, may be gathered from the following report of one of the services in the *Ruskoe Zemlya*:

"Fetler now has returned to Moscow.

"'I have been accused of proselytizing from the State Church, but that is false,' said Mr. Fetler. 'I do not draw people away from the Church, but am endeavouring to turn them from

evil works to a good life, and for that Russia ought to be grateful to me.'

"On Tuesday, January 25, Fetler showed orthodox Moscow what it is that Holy Russia has to be grateful to him for. On that day the prayer hall of the Baptists was crammed full with interested people.

"The meeting began with the customary singing and prayer. Fetler himself preached the sermon. He read from Acts viii., about the Eunuch, pausing also at the baptism at Samaria. The chief feature of Fetler's speech was his most fantastical description of the conversation between Philip and the Eunuch, entirely different from the Bible story. The Eunuch, or, as Fetler continually called him, the Egyptian Minister of Finance, stated to Philip, in Fetler's version of the story, how his conscience was tormented by his sins; how he repented of his dishonesty as the treasurer of the Queen, and how at last he turned to the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem for a solution of the problem of sin. But none, it seemed, were able to bring the Minister of Finance to the desired end. The Scribes in Jerusalem good-humouredly answered him:

"'As for us, we do not trouble much about sin. We have a good income, and we remain calm.'

"At these words the people looked at one another, and the self-satisfied sectaries attacked

their orthodox neighbours on the forms with commentaries on the plainly outspoken words of the propagandist.

" ' Who are the Scribes now ? ' asked my proselytizing neighbour.

" I repelled his advances ; but, answering his own question, he continued :

" ' You may tell this to your Metropolitan (Archbishop).

" On every form sat one or two of the sectaries engaged in the same sort of work.

" Fetler meanwhile continued his fantastic imaginings, saying that none could solve the problem of sin, neither man nor angels, nor God Himself, as He was in heaven, until the Son of God became incarnate and saved mankind.

" After explaining the meaning of the word baptism, Fetler comes to the act itself.

" ' Do you confess,' says he, turning towards those sitting in white robes, ' that by your own strength you could not get free from sin ? '

" ' Yes,' they answered.

" ' Have you believed ? '

" ' We have believed.'

" ' For how many years do you promise to serve Jesus ? '

" ' For the whole of our life.'

" The baptistery is uncovered ; the bearded mouzhik gets into the water and leads in one by

one the white-robed candidates, with the words, 'I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.'

"The whole auditorium was in dead silence, listening to the stirring of the waters. Then there were heard groans of disapproval. Some Orthodox men were trembling like a leaf; some women were almost tearing asunder their clothes. With the rapidity of a bullet others were fleeing out of the hall. Among the public arose conversation and dissatisfaction. But Fetler quietly began to sing and play the harmonium. A table with bread and wine was placed. The laying-on of hands and the Eucharist followed.

"Oh! is not this the same insane fooling about the Sacrament as the heathen used to practise when they arranged comedies about holy things to please the devil and his servants?

"Why, Fetler also says that he does not care a bit for the orthodox water baptism, nor for bread and wine, that he does not acknowledge the holy faith of the Tsar; and he denies that in the Divine Eucharist Christians really unite with Christ, receiving His Divine Body and Blood. For Fetler publicly rejects our Holy Sacraments of baptism and the anointing with oil.

"Rise up, O Cap of the great Monomach! Let the eyes of Vladimir (Metropolitan of Moscow)

see what is being done in his diocese. Look up, Fedor Ivanovitch, and ye, silent ones, blessed Tsars, see how holy Moscow is being defiled by foreign dirt! Arise, ye high and holy ones, for a greater peril has come upon us than that of the Tartars. No Khan, no defiled Tartar ever touched our sanctuary. Where art thou, O Peter, first of the saints? Hast thou lost thy power? And ye, men of God, most blessed Alexei and Jona, terrible even to Napoleon, have ye also left us?

"Come down to us, unhappy ones, O Holy Philip, pillar of orthodoxy! For it is not the blood of the unbaptised that is trampled down, but now even the Blood of the Covenant is counted an unholy thing and the Spirit of Grace is offended. A foolery is being committed and a sacrilege against the most holy Sacraments and the holy faith of the Tsar. Foreign hooligans are killing not mortal bodies, but immortal spirits.

"No more do we call to the living; we appeal to you, O heavenly advocates."

The principal entrance to the Moscow Kremlin is called the "Redeemer's Gate." Over it rises to a considerable height a solid-looking windowless square tower painted red, which is surmounted by a smaller clock-tower, and terminates in a graceful golden spire. Above the narrow archway has hung, from time immemorial, an ikon

of our Lord Jesus. Every person passing beneath that "holy picture" reverently removes his hat. Should he be forgetful, it will be unceremoniously removed for him. Many traditional stories are told of this ikon: how it has miraculously withstood the artillery fire of invaders, defeated the sacrilege of plunderers greedy for its valuable setting, and shielded the city from all manner of evil.

The real Redeemer of mankind is greater than any picture of Him. It is to Him alone in His power to save and bless that the Moscow preachers direct the crowds who flock to hear the Divine message from their lips. Like Paul, they can say, "Him we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

NOTE

A few elucidations of the above article, which has been translated from the Moscow *Russkoe Zemlya*, are needful to make its allusions clear to the British reader.

The writer's invocation to the saints is picturesquely Russian.

He deplores that the appeal to earthly powers against Mr. Fetler is in vain. He turns, therefore, to heavenly powers; not to God, be it noted, but to the blessed dead, the "heavenly advocates." Of these, three were Tsars and three were bishops of Moscow.

"*Ye silent ones, blessed Tsars, see how holy Moscow is being defiled with foreign dirt.*" All the Tsars before

Peter the Great—Ruric and Romanoff—were buried in the Moscow Kremlin. A life-size effigy, arrayed in white, stands at the head of each tomb.

Some of these had themselves defiled Moscow pretty thickly with dirt. Ivan the Cruel, contemporary of our Henry VIII. (Henry married six wives, Ivan seven) often bespattered the great Red Square of the city with the blood of his tortured victims.

(1) *Vladimir Monomachus* was crowned in A.D. 1133. He was a devout and wise monarch. Some of his prayers and exhortations are preserved. Said he: "It is not fasting, nor solitude, nor monastic life that will procure eternal life, but only doing good."

Monomachus interests us especially, because he married an English princess—Gytha, daughter of brave King Harold.

The *cap* of Monomachus I take to mean his crown, preserved in the Kremlin treasury, and used in the coronation services.

(2) Tsar *Feodor Ivanovitch* was the second son of Ivan the Cruel. His elder brother had been struck dead by his inhuman father with an iron-shod walking-stick. Feodor was a weak-witted man, whose gentle manners were an inexpressible relief from the ferocious habits of his predecessor. At his funeral the Muscovites spoke of him as "this angel of sweetness."

(3) "*Most blessed Alexis*" (1645–76) was probably the very wisest Tsar Russia ever had. An Englishman at his court said that he would often stand in church for hours at a time in devout attendance at the services. He would have enjoyed Mr. Fetler's preaching. He was most attentive to the patriarch Nikon, who introduced preaching into Russian services.

With Tsar Alexis, the three following Metropolitans of Moscow are together called "the four great pillars of the Holy Orthodox Church."

(1) "*Peter, first of the saints,*" is not the apostle Peter. He was the first primate of Moscow. Mouravieff, the historian, says he predicted the greatness of Moscow and of Russia nearly six centuries ago.

(2) "*Jona, terrible even to Napoleon,*" succeeded to the patriarchal throne by deposing his predecessor, Basil, and putting out his eyes. There is a legend that Napoleon, when in Moscow, sacrilegiously removed the lid from the coffin of this saint. Jona rebuked the outrage by lifting his hand and shaking his finger at Napoleon, at which the Emperor, terrified, fled from the city.

(3) "*Holy Philip*" was primate in the dark days of Ivan the Cruel. He dared to rebuke the tyrant in the name of God for his enormities. For this he was banished, and ultimately strangled.

The *Russkoe Zemlya* is the organ of the "Black Hundred," euphemistically called "The Union of the Russian People (Soynz Russkavo Naroda)." Europe has heard much of the crimes perpetrated by this sinister organisation.

VOICES OF HOLY KIEFF

XI

VOICES OF HOLY KIEFF

DO you know the dignity of Kieff? More than even Moscow, with its five hundred churches and twenty-two monasteries, Kieff is the spiritual head of the empire. Kieff claims precedence as the original capital of Russia. Tradition tells of the visit of St. Andrew the apostle to the hills upon the eastern bank of the Dnieper.

"Look upon these heights," he exclaimed. "They shall yet shine with the grace of God. Here shall a great city be built, wherein shall be many Christian altars."

1. The voice of Kieff commanded all the realm to become Christian, when Vladimir, the first Christian king, embraced the faith in Kieff. With swift submissiveness, the entire population crowded into the broad waters of the majestic Dnieper to be baptized. Among the rest, Vladimir's six wives and twelve sons were thus made Christians. But the most thrilling scene of that eventful day a thousand years ago was the dragging down and overthrow into the river

of the great god Perun, the Russian Thor, an immense wooden deity with head of silver and flowing beard of gold. The Russians have ever been believers in bushy beards; holding it to be a Divine precept: "Thou shalt not trim the corners of thy beard."

When Perun floated away from Kieff on the waters of the Dnieper, with it went the outward authority of heathenism from Russia; and in Perun's ancient place Greek Orthodox Christianity took her seat, where she still remains enthroned. Much, however, of real heathenism remained; nor is it eradicated until this day.

Kieff has well been called the Canterbury of Russia. Hither come pilgrims in thousands upon thousands, from all parts of the country, to pay homage at the shrines of St. Anthony, St. Andrew and St. Vladimir. From time to time the great Councils of the Russian Church are held in this city of innumerable golden cupolas and domes, where is situated the celebrated missionary monastery, the Pekherskoe Lavra. This monastery, according to Mouravieff, was founded by the tears and fastings and prayers and vigils of St. Anthony.

2. The significance of three resolutions passed at a recent ecclesiastical council in Kieff, held in August 1908, cannot be overlooked. The first resolution petitioned the Government to

" forbid the entry into Russia of missionaries of foreign religions." In this they are only emphasizing the ancient policy of the Russian Empire. No State, not even Rome itself, has held more absolutely the doctrine of the indivisible oneness of State and Church than has Russia. In that empire the faithful own allegiance to no foreign priest or conclave. The Tsar himself is the fountain-head of ecclesiastical authority. The Most Holy Governing Synod, with a layman for *Ober-Procureur,* is the Tsar's organ of government.

Hitherto " foreign religions " have been permitted in Russia, but on rigid conditions. The Greek Orthodox boast of their tolerance, pointing to the great variety of churches—in St. Petersburg, for instance, " Armenian, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Sunnite and Schiite places of prayer." True ; but each little flock has been jealously penned within its fold, and the sheep have wisely kept their heads inside to save their skulls. No faith has liberty to roam at large in Russia except the Greek Orthodox ; and even the liberty promised by the Ukase of Easter 1905, and enjoyed boldly by the people these three years, may be withdrawn at any time by a breath from the Tsar's lips.

The Salvation Army look with longing eyes upon this promising field, and the Army leaders

have sought permission to enter Russia. In passing through Finland, General Booth's followers are in many places in evidence in their familiar quiet uniform. There is but a step between Finland and Russia geographically, but politically between the two there is a great gulf fixed, and to bridge it by giving to Russia the full religious liberty enjoyed in Finland the authorities would have to abandon for ever their ancient ecclesiastical policy. We hold that there would be great gain in this to Russia; Great Britain admires and loves General Booth; in the opinion of other nations the Salvation Army and its activities make for good morals and loftier ideals in the community; but these protestations are all beside the mark. Other nations are outside the Orthodox Church—there's the difference. There is a semi-Oriental pride and passion of attachment to their religio-racial ideals, call it fanaticism if you will, that presents a barrier—hitherto insuperable—to incoming propagandists of the younger Western varieties of the creed of our common Christendom. The spiritual regeneration of Russia will not come from without. It has already begun from within! The leaven is working, and the holy city of Kieff itself attests the fact, as will be seen presently.

The second reactionary resolution adopted by the Holy Orthodox in Kieff was an appeal to

the Synod to cease issuing the Old Testament Scriptures minus the Apocrypha. Only as recently as 1907, after many requests from the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Holy Synod, which supplies the Society with all its Russian and Slavonic Bibles and portions, agreed to print the Old Testament in Russian without the Apocrypha. The Society, being a Protestant institution, cannot assist in circulating the Apocrypha. At once the Society ordered an edition of twenty-five thousand copies, and these were eagerly bought by the public. And now the voice of Kieff is heard condemning the issue ; consequently when the B.F.B.S., a month or two later, ordered another large supply, the Holy Synod declined to reprint.

The third and most despotic resolution of the Council was one adopting regulations to restrict the propagandist operations of " sectants." These illegal regulations provided that no persons other than enrolled members of any non-Orthodox church might be allowed to attend its services. Each church was to be required to supply to the authorities a list of the names and addresses of its members. The pastor was to sign an undertaking that he would admit no other persons to the meetings. If any others were discovered attending, the premises were to be closed.

The immediate effect of these regulations was

that prayer halls were closed everywhere. Evangelical preachers promptly declined to sign the undertaking, on the ground that it was an illegal demand. Arrests and imprisonments for being present at meetings took place in several cities. Ultimately the regulations were seen to be contrary to the Ukase of the Emperor, and they were withdrawn.

3. In 1908, for the first time in Russian history, Kieff uttered yet another voice. The echoes of it have resounded throughout the land. The Russian Baptists held a Convention, and actually in Kieff! Delegates from many little churches of simple Stundist peasants scattered throughout the southern provinces climbed eagerly the steep streets of the city to their meetings. They had a most encouraging tale to tell each other, for the movement is very much alive. It is no importation of an exotic religion. It has arisen among the people themselves. All its present leaders are true Russians, and their activities are self-sustained, including a college for the training of their preachers. The fire burns brightly across the vast steppes of South Russia, and away among the far Caucasian mountains. A number of these Russian brethren attended the Baptist Congress held in the autumn of 1908 in Berlin, where their presence excited the liveliest interest.

Even so long ago as 1891, in the Orthodox Congress convened by that notorious inquisitor-general Pobiedonostzeff, it was complained that Dissent was raising its audacious head even within range of the spiritual guns of Kieff. "Fifteen years ago there was hardly one Protestant in the entire Archbishopric of Kieff . . . now, there is hardly a village free from the heresy (of Stundism). In some places hundreds of families are infected by it. The bishops are doing their best to destroy it, but it is increasing."

It must not be supposed that the Baptist Convention in Kieff was indulgently smiled upon by the civil or the ecclesiastical authorities. On the contrary, the application for permission to hold the meetings was refused; first by the provincial Governor-General, and then on appeal by the Ministry of the Interior at St. Petersburg. The latter authority condescended to state its reasons for refusing, the principal of which were—(1) that the Baptists were but a few and feeble folk, and therefore such a convention as was proposed must be unnecessary; and (2) Kieff being the chief seat of holy orthodoxy, to hold such a convention beneath the august Greek Church nose would be an intolerable insult to that dignified organ. But the convention was held notwithstanding, under the existing licence under which Baptists regularly meet for

worship in the city. The police were on the alert all the week through, and popped in and out of the meetings very suspiciously. This made it necessary that the proceedings should consist for the most part of hymns, and prayers, and Bible readings, with exhortations. Their deliberations on evangelising plans and projects, and the reception of reports from their many centres, were received with hymnbooks open, ready upon the slightest movement near the door to welcome the newcomer with the joyous voice of song.

Will the civil powers give heed to the harsh voice of reaction ? Who can tell ! The religious problem in Russia is at an intensely interesting stage at this moment. The brave and faithful evangelists of that empire need our most generous sympathies and most fervent prayers that their faith and courage may be sustained in the present uncertain hour.

A VISIT TO COUNT LEON TOLSTOY

XII

A VISIT TO COUNT LEON TOLSTOY

IT is not easy to straighten the crooked limbs of the gnarled old oak. But Mr. Fetler despairs of no man alive. An article of his working creed is, "All things are possible to him that believeth." He has had abundant opportunity of witnessing the power of Divine grace in the conversion of people of all kinds, young and old. Many a twisted Russian thorn-bush has he seen transformed into an upright fir-tree, according to the prophecy of Isaiah. Mr. Fetler had it laid upon his heart to visit Count Leon Tolstoy and leave a Gospel message with the venerable and famous Russian.

Count Tolstoy, the champion of ultra-individualism, the declared enemy of human laws and governments, and the apostle of pacific anarchy, has never shown any friendship towards Evangelical religion. His wrath against the intolerant tyranny of the politico-ecclesiastical systems that have for centuries held the world

in their grip, and no nation more absolutely than his own, is admirable. The free West is with him. But his hostility to those systems of religion that are the natural outgrowth and expression of devout souls uninfluenced by external compulsions, and eager only to discover and follow the truth as revealed in Nature, in the Inspired Volume, and in the person of the Son of God, perplexes and distresses many of the admirers of this remarkable and gifted man.

When Mr. Fetler journeyed south from St. Petersburg a year or two ago, to attend a convention of Russian Evangelical believers in Kieff, an opportunity presented itself to pay Count Tolstoy a visit. On his return journey he must needs pass through Tula and Moscow. The Count's estates and country residence lie just to the south of the former city. In the neighbourhood is also the home of an excellent lady, who is cordially disposed towards Mr. Fetler's work in Petersburg, and indeed to all work for God everywhere. Here he broke his long journey, remaining as guest for a few days.

Yassnaya Polyana ("Bright Home"), the residence of the Count, lies a short distance out of Tula. The road from the city runs through a great pine forest, the property of the Tsar. The carriage-way leading up to the house would strike a British visitor as weedy and neglected.

It is plain that the owner pays no more attention to drives and lawns and gardens than the ordinary Russian. Giant forest-trees he does pay attention to. When younger, he was more expert with his keen axe than ever Gladstone was, and many a proud monarch of his own woods has he laid low. But the exuberant succulent growth of the brief Russian summer is allowed to flourish unmolested. The tall trees crowd closely about the dwelling-house—a plain two-story building, along a part of the front of which runs a broad verandah, which affords a shady retreat for the family on hot summer days. The paint is bright and fresh upon the building, after the Russian manner, giving a very pretty and attractive appearance to this homestead in the forest.

As Mr. Fetler approached the house the Count, who was then nearing his eightieth birthday, was just coming out, and espying the stranger he advanced to give him cordial greeting. It was easy to recognise the novelist. All Russia and indeed the world is familiar with his broad, rugged face, so expressive of tremendous strength of character, his thick bushy eyebrows, protecting small steel-grey deep-set eyes, his flowing grey beard, and thin wavy locks—a bit of animated granite. He wore the moujik's well-known loose coarse grey tunic falling to his knees, and gathered around the waist in a leathern belt.

But he was not bare-footed, as represented in Repin's celebrated portrait and in the plaster-cast copies of it in relief, so familiar in the shops of Petersburg and Moscow. His strong, high-legged boots are his own workmanship ; for one of the fundamental articles in Tolstoy's practical philosophy is : " Get others to work for you as little as possible ; and do all that you can for others. Do not profit by the drudgery of the poor and ignorant ; but use your own muscles. Rely upon honest toil, and begin by endeavouring to minister to your own wants."

The pastor from St. Petersburg introduced himself in a few words.

" I am just going for my morning walk : perhaps you will not mind keeping me company," said the Count affably.

The novelist and the evangelist, the veteran and the young Christian enthusiast, tramped away together into the fields, skirting here a patch of corn rustling in the breeze, and there a stretch of meadow-land in which, in the course of a few weeks, the Count would be busy with scythe and fork haymaking like any common moujik ; for Tolstoy has always found keen enjoyment in working on his farm-land.

" Every man ought to do enough work with his hands each day to maintain himself," he said on one occasion.

The fragrant breath of early summer was among the trees as they entered the wood. The world was awaking, and had begun to put on her beautiful garments. Mr. Fetler had just come from Kieff. Tolstoy was interested to learn his impressions of the celebrated holy city and its unending crowds of pilgrim-visitors. Emerging upon the high road, they encountered several of these very men, the long-haired mendicant pilgrims in dirt and rags so common in Russian hamlets and highways in the summer-time. Seeing the Count, they approached him, bowing low, and asking alms.

"No! I have nothing for you. I have given all I can give," he said curtly.

"Our wants are but few, little father," they replied meekly, as they turned to go on their way.

Count Tolstoy lingered in the roadway intently observing the retreating figures; and Mr. Fetler stood silently watching the Count's eager face.

"I cannot let them go, unaided," he presently muttered to himself. He groped in his pocket and brought out a few kopecks.

"*Edeete siuda* (Come here)! I will find something for you, brothers."

The beggar-men turned their impassive faces, and seeing the proffered coins, came forward and

took them with many expressions of humility and gratitude. The Count's rugged face lighted up with a smile, and his eyes followed their retreating figures admiringly, almost affectionately, as they went on their way.

"If I were younger, I would live a pilgrim-life myself," he said. "To my mind it attains the highest ideal. Jesus was a pilgrim. To that life He called His disciples."

"We may be His disciples without going on pilgrimage," replied the evangelist.

The conversation, thus started upon the subject of personal religion, was taken up warmly, the younger man, while defending his own views, paying respect to the opinions of his host. Tolstoy denounced the doctrine of atonement by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus as "crude and coarse." When Mr. Fetler appealed to the New Testament on the subject, the novelist cut him short with :

"My New Testament is much smaller than yours. I reject a great deal that you accept."

"By what authority ?" demanded Mr. Fetler.

"Ah !" replied Tolstoy. "My own opinion, of course."

"That authority may satisfy you, but it cannot affect anyone else, you see. But what parts of the New Testament do you reject ?"

"All the miracle-stories, for example."

"You surely accept the resurrection of our Lord?"

"No, I do not. I see no necessity for it. He said, 'It is finished.' His life-work was done when He was put to death. Why should He rise again?"

"But we believe in a living Saviour. 'He ever liveth.' We look for His appearing. It is the hope of all true Christians. 'This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go.'"

"I have no such expectation. If some one were to come here to us now, and tell us that the risen Christ has arrived in Yassnaya Polyana, and is walking in the garden over there, I would not care to go and have a look at Him. It is mere superstition. He has been dead for nearly two millenniums."

"Paul bases the whole Christian religion on the fact of the resurrection of our Lord. 'If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain.'"

"Do not quote Paul to me. I do not believe in Paul."

"Do you reject his writings also, as inspired?"

"Inspired? Yes. How can they be inspired? Does he not command you to be obedient to governments? Paul has been the sure prop of every atrocious tyranny that has masqueraded under the guise of authority."

"There you grievously misrepresent not only Paul, but also the whole of the Scripture teaching respecting civil obligations."

"How so? It is plain enough: 'Let everybody be obedient to the authorities.' They are his words."

"If you will read the passage in full you will see that Paul was developing, to these early believers, the rules of Jesus Christ's kingdom; the rules of peace, and unselfishness, and love, and humility. Such rules obviously forbid setting oneself up against governments; and particularly that ideal government that 'encourages good works and is the terror of evildoers,' to which Paul especially refers.

"You must also remember, Count, that the Scriptures and Paul do not command an indiscriminate obedience to whatever the rulers of this world may ordain. This is clearly seen from the example of the apostles themselves, who, when charged by those in authority with disobedience, replied, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'"

The Count was silent; and Mr. Fetler, lifting up his heart to heaven, prayed that the right word might be given him in speaking to Tolstoy about a much more important matter, his own spiritual condition.

"Count Tolstoy, forgive me for asking you a very personal question."

"What is it?" he inquired.

"You have held and circulated your views of religion and God and man for many years——"

"Not 'circulated,'" he interrupted. "That is not my affair. Other people are responsible for that."

"Do your views content you? Do they prepare you for death and for eternity?"

"They satisfy me now. What may be afterward I do not know."

"Those parts of the Bible that you reject speak of a judgment to come——"

"I know—I know."

"And of a Saviour of sinners, who through His death prepares us to face that judgment."

"I cannot listen to you," he cried impatiently. "Much better is it for us to walk in silence than to speak so unprofitably."

"I did not mean to offend you," said Mr. Fetler. "I felt compelled to speak thus."

"I do not see how you could be compelled. What compelled you?"

"Like yourself I have discovered certain truths that satisfy my own soul—give me peace and joy, and hope for the great hereafter. But unlike you, who disclaim all responsibility for the opinions and lives of other people, I am under my Master's command to tell 'every creature' what I know, and to urge them to repent of sin

and believe in the Lord Jesus. I should be disobedient if I were silent."

"Each man's duty is to discover truth for himself," he retorted. "My views are sufficient for myself."

"How, then, is that consistent with loving one's neighbour as oneself?"

"Well, here is the house: come in and take a little refreshment."

Yassnaya Polyana is the Count's summer residence. When winter draws near the family moves into Moscow, to the rambling old mansion in Hamovnicheski Lane, on the outskirts of the city. Although Tolstoy has been excommunicated by the Greek Church, yet "the holy picture" still hangs in its accustomed place in the corner of honour in the house, with the familiar lighted lamp in front. Countess Tolstoy is a devout Orthodox, and in all domestic matters not personal to her husband, her inclination is the law of the home.

The Count willingly accepted a selection of Gospel leaflets lately written by a talented Christian lady in St. Petersburg, and published in that city. It is not long ago since Tolstoy denounced the art and practice of printing as the contrivance of a particularly cunning devil, who has made it his business to give the widest circulation to the most foolish and often infamous

thoughts and actions of mankind. The Bread of Life is also in the printed page, and help, and treasures, and, above all, Gospel grace. When Mr. Fetler entered, a New Testament lay open upon the table, and one of Tolstoy's disciples sat reading it.

Count Tolstoy is a philanthropist and a philosopher. As a philanthropist he is keenly conscious of the sinful and squalid existence of the masses of his fellow-men. As a philosopher he prescribes for these ills certain remedies, according to his light.

"On a rainy Sunday in the autumn," he once wrote, "I drove in an omnibus through the market-place near the Souhareva tower in Moscow. For about half a mile the carriage made its way through a compact mass of people. From morning to evening do thousands of human beings, the greater part of whom are ragged and hungry, prowl about here in the dirt, abusing, cheating, and hating each other. These men will spend their evenings in taverns and public-houses, and the night in their corners and dens. Sunday is the best day of the week for them. On Monday in their infected dens they will again set to the work of which they are heartily sick. Reflect what the lives of these men and women are. They are true martyrs."

The philosopher in Tolstoy prescribes rules for human betterment. They are, briefly—(1) more

open-air life ; (2) physical work ; (3) family joys ; (4) much friendly company ; and (5) sound health.* These are, of course, very excellent ; but they remind us of the prescription of pills to cure an earthquake. Our *British* "Count Tolstoy," General William Booth, like his Russian contemporary a veteran philanthropist and philosopher, has been brought into ameliorative contact with a greater sum-total of human misery than probably any man who has ever lived. He has perceived that these economic problems are, at their root, mainly spiritual and personal. His remedy is vastly nearer the mark than those prescribed by the seer of Tula. It is a remedy sublimely transcendental and entirely practical. It is to lead the degraded and the despairing directly to Him who says, "Come unto Me . . . take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest." At His feet, squalor disappears, miseries melt away, selfishness is slain, and all manner of sins are blotted out as a cloud.

* *What I Believe*, by L. Tolstoy, trans. by C. Popoff (Elliot Stock), pp. 177-81.

RUSSIAN PRAYER HALLS

XIII

RUSSIAN PRAYER HALLS

"HOW would Englishmen feel," exclaimed Dr. Dillon, "if a drunken man could break the glass in the windows of their church or chapel, and the State forbid them to mend them without petitioning, requesting, bribing, visiting and otherwise humiliating themselves? But in Muscovy to disregard any one of a whole network of similar petty limitations, is to bring down upon one's head a sentence of banishment or hard labour."

The allusion is to the law requiring "sectants" to obtain the permission of the authorities before proceeding with any rebuilding or any repairs of their prayer halls. It goes without saying that the permission to erect such a building in the first instance is not particularly easy to obtain; although the law of May 1883 allowed Evangelicals to have prayer-halls on the same conditions as the Old Believers. It all depends

on the good-will of the highly-placed tchinovnik to whom application is made and the influences brought to bear on him.

The British reader at the mention of "prayer halls" will conjure up visions of little neat detached buildings, red brick, slate roofs, comfortably furnished, such as one is familiar with everywhere in this land. Nothing could be further from the actuality, if we except one or two privately-owned halls in St. Petersburg, those on private estates, and the halls in certain distinctively "sectarian" districts in the far south. In the villages the "prayer hall" is the common izba or cottage of a Stundist moujik, or a shed attached to a very primitive farmstead surrounded by prodigious quantities of mud, dust, or snow, according to the season of the year. A separate building, erected expressly for worship, among the rural evangelicals of Russia is a luxury yet to be provided, in the great majority of cases.

The meeting-place, whether izba or outhouse, has walls of earth. It is without ceiling. The floor is the bare earth, trodden hard by many feet through the lapse of long years, and worn into humps and hollows. The walls are limewashed and destitute of decoration or adornment. There are rough wooden benches around and across the room. The place is usually packed

to suffocation with men, women and children crowded on the seats, thronging the doorways, and huddling together on the top of the huge stove. But one feature is noticeable: in contrast to the generality of the hovels of the moujiks, that of the converted peasant is scrupulously clean. Three of the earliest signs of grace in a Russian moujik's family are, the passing of negligence and filthiness from the izba, the disappearance of the ubiquitous ikon from its accustomed corner, and the banning of vodka.

These cottage-meetings of the moujiks have yielded tremendous results for the future of religion in the Russian Empire. It was in the cottage of the peasant Sutaeff, near Tula, that Count Tolstoy studied the Gospel of Christ with such fruits as to-day appear. It was in a cottage-meeting on one of his estates that Baron Uekskull, the famous Baptist evangelist of the Baltic Provinces, was led into the light.

In the great cities, this "prayer hall" is a room somewhere in the capacious intricacies of one of the great tenement houses—perhaps in the cellar, perhaps on the third floor.

By the statute law no authorisation is needed for a prayer-room in a private dwelling-house. This point the Governing Senate has decided on several occasions. But Baron Uekskull has reminded us that in his country the police are

above the law. It is well to be on the safe side. "Whatever is not allowed by sealed document is forbidden," is a judicious rule to observe. Raids by the police, arrests, confiscations of goods, and prosecutions, even if you are ultimately successful, are disagreeable experiences, which petitioning, especially if accompanied by "palm oil," will obviate.

The householder is a cautious man. He is held responsible by the authorities if illegal meetings are held on his premises; and as the fines are heavy, he is constrained to be very careful as to his tenants and their callers. Then, the dvornik, or concierge, is usually a spy in the pay (if he be found to be worth it) of the police; and every man and woman who passes in and out at the central gateway is suspiciously eyed. Every morning the dvornik must attend at the office of the pristav, to present his record of the comings and goings of his house on the previous day and night. If strangers have entered, he must present their passports for official inspection and endorsement. (On the examination of my passport an official was sent half-way across the city to inquire how old my daughter was, as her age was not recorded in the document!) They are particular! If the dvornik should fail to report a meeting, and it should otherwise come to the knowledge of the

police, he may tremble for his fate. He will probably sup on birch gruel !

It is a continual miracle that under such conditions meetings for prayer and Bible study have been, and are, held at all. Practically every meeting now licensed among the Russians, as distinct from those of German descent and other foreign nationalities, began with illegal and more or less secret gatherings held in the teeth of perils innumerable. It is credibly stated that in the diocese of Vyatka, within the last five years, there were sixty-five prayer halls, of which only five were licensed by the Government ; and in the diocese of Nijni Novgorod, out of a total of one hundred and eighty-four prayer halls, only twelve were so licensed.

A curious conflict of authority respecting prayer halls took place in the autumn of the year 1908. It is a striking illustration of the delicate balance at present maintained between a civil authority that is progressive, on the one hand, and reactionary clericalism on the other. A new life is beginning to pulsate through the long-benumbed body politic, and the nerves of its enormous bulk tingle painfully in consequence.

The authorities, apparently in conflict, were the Most Holy Synod, the body which controls the religious life of the Russian State Church, and the Ministry of the Interior, under the

direction of the Premier, M. Stolypin. Mother Church or Giant Maul (from whichever standpoint you look at the matter) determined to assert the mastery over those Russians of sectarian proclivities who had not succeeded in making good their escape from Greek Orthodoxy, sent round orders for the closing of the unlicensed prayer halls. The registered meeting-places of recognised religious bodies complying with the regulations, not being subject to the Holy Synod, were not interfered with ; but all places of resort for religious meetings not holding these licences were considered to lie within the province of the Russian ecclesiastical authority, and the police permits were peremptorily withdrawn.

Complaints of interference with the little prayer-meetings at first began to come in to the Ministry of the Interior from the remoter provinces. Women with babies in their arms were dragged from such gatherings and thrust into the rough prisons, while others were heavily fined for being present. M. Stolypin, to his honour be it stated, promptly issued orders, in the specific cases brought to his notice, that the meetings, when held in conformity with the regulations, were to be allowed to continue. Then the Orthodox Church appears to have adopted the bolder and more effective policy of engineering, by means of the local tchinovniks, a general suppression of

Evangelicalism. Even the capital city itself did not escape the priestly ban. Gospel meetings that have been held by Evangelical Christians in a quiet way in St. Petersburg for many years, received unpleasant police attention; and premises recently rented and opened at considerable expense for a forward movement to accommodate the eagerly appreciative public were compulsorily closed. For not many days, however, did the reaction triumph. The halls are once again opened; and the liberty granted under the Tsar's manifesto is as freely enjoyed as the five hundred thousand "little Tsarlets" scattered throughout the empire, the tchinovniks of all grades, will permit. It would be intensely interesting to know what happened behind the scenes in this struggle between the Premier and the Orthodox Church. We may learn about it some day.

Beyond question, many of the meetings held, for example, by the Stundists of South Russia, Baptists and Evangelical Christians, have been illegal, being held either without licence or police permit. The manifesto of Easter 1905, while conceding to the Russian the privilege of changing his religion if he be so disposed, gave no right to hold public assemblies, religious or other, without compliance with those police regulations that require for the holding

of meetings either a general licence or a special permit for a particular occasion. For a brief period after the coronation of Tsar Alexander III., in 1882, the Stundists were, by the Imperial clemency, permitted to hold their meetings in their houses at will, but this privilege was soon cancelled; and the people have since then been left, in their religious aspirations, face to face with a set of stern laws and still sterner tchinovniks, behind whom the Holy Synod, uneasy under the menace of a great upheaval and secession, and taking huge credit to itself as the upholder of the majesty of the laws, from its lofty vantage-ground seeks to thwart the spiritual rebels at every turn. It would hardly have been possible for the simple moujiks of many a Russian village, who have embraced Stundist teaching from itinerant evangelists, to comply with the regulations in the matter of registration and licence. They have but few leaders, are widely scattered, are very poor, are quite unskilled in legal technicalities, and have no periodical literature or other such guides and aids as are commonplaces in our religious life. It is sufficient for them if they can in the long winter evenings resort to a neighbour's izba to read the Scriptures or learn to read them, and pray together in a simple manner, though with much fervour and many tears. The necessity for taking out a

licence or for the formidable task of drawing up a formal petition to the pristav or the governor for a permit for their little neighbourly meetings is not very obvious to their artlessness. The secret meeting is much more convenient; and it is consequently held. And in the brief and golden summer, when the boundless pine forests breathe forth their incense and the birds make joyous music, the little companies naturally prefer the free unlicensed rendezvous of the deep glades and lonely hillsides, and, needing no permit from tchinovnik or Tsar, hold their thrilling little assemblies among "the mountains and in dens and caves of the earth."

The inconveniences and uncertainty of tenure of the hired hall make evangelistic work difficult in the cities.

The landlord of a certain hall in South Russia which accommodates about a thousand persons, and is crowded every Sunday evening, gave the evangelicals notice to quit. The enemy had cunningly offered an increase of 20 roubles per month rent. With much self-denial, the church undertook to pay this extra money, and they were allowed to remain. At once the foe, not to be beaten, lodged a complaint with the Governor that the hall was unsafe, and ought to be closed.

One Sunday afternoon the town surveyor and a police inspector attended the service, and sat

at the back of the hall. The preacher, all unaware of the presence of his powerful auditors, was led to speak of the Christian duty of living orderly and peaceful lives, being obedient to authority as good citizens. The tchinovniks listened attentively. When the congregation stood up to sing, the inspector marched to the front, and the face of the startled preacher became a shade paler. The officer approached the platform as though to speak. The preacher leaned forward respectfully to learn his will.

"What number is the hymn?"

The preacher gave the information.

"Where can we purchase the books? They are very good. The surveyor and I would like to obtain copies for ourselves."

And thus the threatening cloud melted away into the blue heavens. The report of the officers was satisfactory, and the meetings are still being held in the hall.

"LO, HERE IS CHRIST! OR THERE!"

XIV

"LO, HERE IS CHRIST! OR THERE!"

THE prolific multiplication of religious and rationalistic sects in Russia was a remarkable feature of the nation's history in the nineteenth century. Many of these died almost as quickly as they sprang into being; some survive until this day. They were the product of the fervent awakening of the peasantry to the heart-chilling spiritual deadness of the national church in general. Much information respecting many of these bodies may be obtained from the works of Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace, E. B. Lanin, Stepniak, and other authors.

It is here necessary that mention should be made of them, in order that the reader may perceive something of the peril to which Evangelicalism is exposed in a country where the rural population (and nine-tenths of the Russian population is rural) is almost entirely illiterate, and exceedingly superstitious and credulous. How easy it is for the good vessel, when lacking care-

ful pilotage and deprived of experienced officers, to make shipwreck upon the rocks of error and folly !

The sect of the Malyovantzy is an apt instance of this, and may be taken as typical of many similar quasi-spiritual movements. The story of these people has been told in a booklet published in Berlin by an anonymous author. Dr. Dillon also called attention to their singularities some years ago.

The Malyovantzy sprang from the Baptists in the Government of Kieff. These had suffered cruelly at the hands of the authorities ; their meetings being suppressed, and their leaders and teachers sent into banishment. The Baptist congregations being thus bereft of their spiritual instructors, it is not to be wondered at that many of them fell a prey to grievous errors of belief and practice.

Kondrat Malyovany had himself been a Baptist, having been baptised with other candidates amid a scene of intense religious enthusiasm in a pond in the village of Kerdan, near Kieff, in the year 1880. He was of the peasant class, married, with a family of seven children, and by trade a waggon-builder and wheelwright. Shortly after his baptism, Malyovany was brought into touch with a member of a sect of mystics, who was confined in the prison of the town in which he lived. Malyovany visited the man in the

prison, where they had many earnest conversations on the one absorbing topic, the Word of God. These conversations were destined later to bear remarkable fruit. The imprisoned mystic, with other members of his sect, was sent away as a criminal to the Caucasus, to the prison at Elizabetpol. But Malyovany pondered deeply upon the novel and startling suggestions that had been made to him. A new world of thought was opened up to his dazzled mind. With four like-minded companions, he read attentively the Book of the Revelation and the Old Testament prophecies. Giving a direct present-day and local interpretation to the predictions respecting the coming of Christ in the flesh, an overpowering conviction seized them that Christ was at that time to appear, and in their midst.

One morning Malyovany announced to his comrades that he had had in the night a celestial vision. The heavens had opened, and a supernatural voice had hailed him as " the Firstborn, the Son of God." The ecstatic condition into which he had been thrown by this revelation swiftly communicated itself, first to his four friends, who forthwith decided that they were the four evangelists of the Christ and heralds of the coming Kingdom of God, and later to great numbers of the people of the surrounding villages and towns.

Malyovany appeared in white garments before the crowds who assembled in front of his house to pay him their reverent homage. The scenes that followed are almost incredible. The multitude flung themselves upon the ground before him, offering fervent prayers to the accompaniment of loud sobs and many tears. They stretched out their arms towards him in piteous supplication, confessing their sins and reciting their sorrows. Malyovany looked around upon the kneeling people with an expression of great tenderness, and lifting up his hands to heaven, declaimed against the sinfulness of mankind, urging his hearers to repentance and good works, and laying especial emphasis upon the necessity of cherishing mutual love in their hearts (a cardinal doctrine with them), and of believing in himself as " the Firstborn, the Son of God upon the earth."

" The Kingdom of God," he cried, " is about to appear among men ; but they who would enter in must be prepared grievously to suffer for its sake. Thus all the prophets declare."

But Malyovany was not to be allowed to assert his divine dignity and authority without a rival. There wandered into those parts a religious pilgrim (*bogomoltzy*, they are called) named Tschekmareff, who hailed from the north-east. He also believed that he was the incarnate and Eternal

Son ; but he had not hitherto made public his claim. This man sought an interview with Malyovany, and communicated to him his inward conviction. Here was an impasse. There could not possibly be two Christs ! Malyovany was sorely perplexed. However, after a few moments' reflection, he turned to the new-comer and said :

" Tschekmareff, listen to me. If you believe that I am not the Firstborn, and that you are, I will certainly give up my claim and recognise yours, and become your humble disciple. The Kingdom of God has certainly come. How blest are we who have brought it to mankind ! "

Tschekmareff was so overcome by the ready self-abnegation of the other, that he at once surrendered his claim, and acknowledged that of his rival.

" Truly thou art indeed the Firstborn," he exclaimed. " I will be thy forerunner. I am none other than John the Baptist ! "

The illiterate Baptist peasantry of the district, being deprived by the persecutions of the Government of their trusted instructors and leaders, fell an easy prey in great numbers to the fantastical pretensions of these neurotic visionaries. Very speedily Malyovany secured about three hundred followers. Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox moujiks swelled the numbers of his

disciples. Some of the Malyovantzy outdid their leaders in the frenzy of their imaginary revelations from heaven. One Philip Krivenko, a builder, pondered long on the words, "*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.*"

"He will draw me up—up to glory," he reflected. "That is surely what the verse means. O that I had faith to believe it!"

One day he was at work upon the scaffolding of a building. There came to him a beautiful angel hovering in the air (so he declared afterwards).

"Philip, Philip, make a spring towards me, and I will carry thee up to heaven!"

"I dare not," answered Krivenko. "I should be killed. See the rough stones lying below!"

"Philip, Philip, hast thou forgotten the words of Scripture," answered the angel reproachfully: "'*They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*'? Come, brother, come to me!"

And thereupon two angels appeared beside him on the scaffold, and seizing him each by an arm, flew out with him towards the angel in mid-air. Krivenko fell to the ground with a tremendous scream, where later he was found shockingly injured, lying in a pool of blood.

A similar accident, the fruit of like fanaticism, befel in a neighbouring village a peasant named

Janko Manzapara. Formerly a Roman Catholic, he had adopted the beliefs of the Malyovantzy, and persuaded himself that he was gifted with superhuman levitation and powers of flight. He climbed a high ladder, and leaping out into the air, crashed to earth a mangled mass.

Instances might be multiplied of the most fantastic dreams being construed into divine revelations, and as such being reverently accepted by the Malyovantzy.

The movement caused such intense excitement in the Kieff province that the police interfered and arrested Malyovany, whom they regarded as demented. The meetings of his disciples were broken up, and his followers were very roughly handled. The Greek Orthodox popes eagerly lent their aid in the maltreatment of these misguided people. They were in some cases beaten mercilessly, even until their limbs were crushed and broken. The more prominent members were put into prison.

Meanwhile, new adherents were attracted; and even when at last Malyovany was confined in a madhouse in Kieff, the sect continued to grow.

The tenets accepted by the Malyovantzy are deserving of notice. They resemble in some of their features those of the earlier Dukhobortzy and other Russian mystics. The Scripture his-

tories are regarded as parables and allegories. The Gospel narratives too are said to represent inward and spiritual experiences only, and ought therefore to be interpreted esoterically.

A considerable knowledge of the letter of the Scriptures, the Malyovantzy had obtained among the Baptists ; it being the practice of the latter to commit entire chapters to memory. A Russian writer—no friend, by the way, to that denomination—has left on record this witness : " Of all the Russian sects, the Baptists have the greatest knowledge of the Bible." But the Malyovantzy differ widely from the Baptists in their principles of interpretation. They believe that to them have been given the final revelation from God, the spiritual key to the mysteries of the Word ; and the living person of the Divine Firstborn and Saviour.

They deny the future life and the resurrection from the dead. Say they : Living men are in the graves of their sins. When a man forsakes his sins and becomes pure, then he has risen from the dead. " The sting of death is sin." " He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." They believe that those who are alive at " the end of the world " will live on for ever ; but they who die will not rise again. The departed soul passes into another body. They look forward to " the last day " as the day

of entry into " that eternal kingdom where there are no superiors and no authorities," where food will be given by God Himself, without trouble and without toil.

The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper they interpret spiritually also, and condemn the literal observance of them. Their discipline is very strict. They will not permit the marriage of their young people with persons outside their fellowship ; and disorderly members are promptly expelled.

They recognise neither saints' days nor sabbaths. They meet together when they find it convenient so to do, and without order of service, conduct their meetings in the most informal and unconventional manner, handing round glasses of weak tea and the tobacco-pouch with great sociability. Each new-comer kisses everybody in the room, men and women. Occasionally their assemblies reach a phrenetic pitch. They indulge in vehement dancing and gesticulations, and shout and scream and shiver in a very delirium of agitation. They form into a ring, and whirl round and round in a dance that makes the onlooker giddy to watch it. " They jump, clap their hands, contort their faces, beat themselves, weep, laugh, moan, and sob, the perspiration rolling in streams from their faces and bodies, until at last they fall to the ground from

sheer exhaustion." At least, so it has been stated in unsympathetic Russian official reports. Their public prayers are very affecting. The assembly is bathed in tears. " O Lord my God—my soul ! My dear, dear soul, hear me ! O Lord, my great Father, save me ; O save me, Thou great One, thou merciful One ! "

The Malyovantzy claim to possess the " gift of tongues." They chatter and shout a series of incoherent and unintelligible sounds, and sometimes imitate the howling, lowing, mewing, crowing and whistling of the animals and birds in their farms and forests. Notwithstanding their excesses and absurdities, their enemies attest their personal and social virtues, and the striking reformation effected in depraved characters through their propagandism.

" *When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they were as sheep having no shepherd.*" Pathetically and loudly do they plead for judicious spiritual teachers, who will expound more perfectly to them the Word of God, and who will guide their stumbling feet into the ways of truth and peace.

SOME RUSSIAN SAINTS

XV

SOME RUSSIAN SAINTS

STROLLING through one of the Royal palaces, we paused before a holy picture hanging upon the wall in an imperial bedchamber.

"I must frankly admit," said a Russian lady, one of our party of visitors, "that although I have embraced evangelical truth, I can never look upon an ikon without reverence."

"Are you prompted to worship it, as you formerly did?"

"I never really worshipped the ikon. Educated Russians never —rarely—do. I worshipped the Deity of which it is the visible representation; or if it be the ikon of a saint, then I reverenced the saint. The sight of an ikon still prompts in a measure the old feelings."

"Do you, then, find a visible representation necessary or helpful to the thought of our Lord Jesus?"

"Oh no! Not to the thought of Jesus—at least, not now. I have learned to be independent

of such media in communion with Him. And as for the saints, I do not invoke them now. But I could not treat an ikon lightly. They help the faith—such as it is—of millions of my Russian fellow-countrymen."

"Such as it is!" And what is it, this faith in saints, the saints of which the countless millions of ikons everywhere throughout Russia, ikons large and small, ikons of gold encrusted with priceless jewels, and gaudily coloured ikons of tin, the ikons of the imperial palaces and those in the hovels of the moujiks on the steppes, are the outward and visible representations? The Orthodox Russian is a hereditary ikonolater.

When in droshky or tram-car or afoot you traverse the city, you observe that everybody is continually doffing the hat, making reverent obeisance, crossing himself and herself as they pass the holy picture. It stands by the wayside in an elaborate shrine, or is affixed in solitary simplicity against a wall in a conspicuous place, with the sacred lamp burning before it. If the ikon be within a shrine, there is pretty certain to be a crowd in front doing homage, the lordly and the lowly, costly furs and repulsive rags jostle together on equal terms before the saint.

Novgorod city—not Nijni (= New), where the fair is held,but great Novgorod, the ancient city, about a hundred miles south of Petersburg—is

very largely given over to the manufacture of ikons, which are turned out in incredible numbers each year. In Nijni Novgorod, on the Volga, the turnover of the ikon-shops and the book-shops are equal, about £15,000 per annum. "That suggests sad reflections," says Mr. G. H. Perris.

St. Nicholas is said to be first favourite of all the saints, among the Russian moujiks. His ikon is in every peasant's home. Fear is the common incentive to worship in the empire. The people dread impending ills, the malignity of evil spirits, or perhaps even the anger of one of the saints whom they imagine they have neglected or offended. St. Nicholas is generally regarded with much affection. He is the poor man's celestial friend. He is willing to do mortals a good turn when he can. Hence there are two days in the year devoted to the honour of this saint, two "festivals of St. Nicholas." Hence also two of the Tsars, the present emperor and the monarch of fifty or sixty years ago, and grand-dukes and other notabilities innumerable have been named after this popular saint.

The story of St. Nicholas and the carter bears some resemblance to the classic legend respecting Hercules. It is said that this saint was walking one miry day in early winter along a Russian forest-track. His companion was St. Casian.

They presently came upon an unfortunate moujik whose cart was hopelessly stuck in the mud. The oxen were exhausted in their vain struggles to move it, and the carter was in despair. St. Nicholas hastened to his aid, against the expostulations of St. Casian, who begged him to keep away from the mire. By the strength of St. Nicholas the wheels began to move, the cart was raised out of the slimy ruts, and the moujik volubly expressed his gratitude to the kind-hearted stranger. But oh, the state of the saintly hands and feet! The saintly sleeves, too, and skirts were grossly bemired.

How many a spot defiles the robe
That wraps an earthly saint!

When the two saints re-entered heaven, St. Nicholas was not fit to be seen. He had to hurry away to the celestial lavatory. But the story of his good-natured act went round among the moujiks, with the result that the Russian Church gives him a double honour with two festivals in the year. St. Casian, for his unsympathetic aloofness, has to put up with but one, and that is held only in leap year. Alas for the unpopular, even among the beatified!

The ancient god of heathen Russia, Perun, is strikingly reproduced among the saints of the Orthodox Church in St. Elias. This saint, like

the heathen deity, is considered to be an authority on meteorology, and to have control of sunshine and storms, the winds and the thunder, particularly the latter. There is an amusing story told of a contest between St. Elias and St. Nicholas over a peasant's field of corn, in which St. Nicholas scored heavily against the weather-controller.

The two ikons that probably receive the largest amount of public homage in the empire are " our lady of Kazan " in St. Petersburg, and the " Iberian mother " in Moscow. " Our lady of Kazan " is the chief ikon of the Kazan cathedral, which is a conspicuous building on the Nevsky Prospect in the northern capital. This church, which is strictly the cathedral church of the city, has a spacious and imposing semicircular columned frontage, resembling that of St. Peter's in Rome.

" Our Lady " the ikon is located in the ikonostas or screen behind the altar. Tiny angels are holding a crown upon the Virgin's head ; the Divine Child is in the act of blessing, with right hand upraised ; and around both their heads are rays of glory. The picture is covered with splendid jewels. One of the diamonds in the crown, worth an immense fortune, was given to the holy picture by Peter the Great. A grand duchess of later times contributed a sapphire

of extraordinary size and brilliancy. To this ikon come the emperors of Russia to do homage on entering the city and before departing from it. All high officers of State and generals going forth to war follow their sovereign's example in this particular. "Our lady of Kazan" is therefore an ikon of importance in Russia. When Pastor J. W. Ewing, with Mr. Fetler and a few friends, visited this celebrated church, they together lifted their hearts in prayer to Heaven in a quiet corner among its magnificent granite columns. They forgot the proximity of "our lady."

The "Iberian mother" is of equal importance in her own city of Moscow. Unlike the Petersburg ikon, that of Moscow is continually on the move. From her little chapel she is taken in great state in a superb vehicle drawn by four horses to the houses of the people in all parts of the city. Her visits, however, are not "without money and without price," or how could her great company of retainers be kept in good condition and affluence? Her income is said to be about ten thousand roubles a year. There is a table of fees arranged; and if you desire the ikon to be present to bless a wedding, or a birthday, or a baptism, or to attend the bedside of a sick person, you make your application to the pope in charge, and pay according to the scale; then the horses are harnessed, the coachman, bare-

headed, mounts to his seat, and the holy picture sets forth to visit your domicile. As the stately ecclesiastical procession moves along the streets of the city, the crowds on either side reverently uncover, bow, and cross themselves. This is an everyday spectacle in Moscow.

The saint who has played a more conspicuous part in Russian military history than any other is St. Sergius, of the Troitsky Monastery, near Moscow. His most famous connection with the battle-field was the great victory his blessing secured to the Russian arms against the Tartars, when the Muscovites, under Dmitry of the Don, broke the oppressive Tartar yoke. Dmitry himself ascribed his success to a higher Power than any saint, for history tells us that he and his troops sang together the inspiring 46th Psalm, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" However, it was what Cromwell would have called "a crowning mercy," and the reputation of Sergius was established for all time. Since that great day his picture has many times been carried into the tented field by the Tsars, with varying success. In the Troitsky (Trinity) Monastery, which he founded, there is a shrine to his memory, built of solid silver, which weighs 936 lbs. There is also a singular model representation of the scene of the Last Supper; our Lord and each disciple being of pure gold, only

Judas the betrayer being cast in common brass. A favourite St. Sergius ikon represents the tradition of a visit paid to the saint in his cell by the Virgin Mary, who was accompanied on the occasion by the apostles John and Peter. His monastery is a treasure-house of jewels of enormous value and royal and priestly robes of astonishing magnificence. But its most highly-prized treasures are the coarse woollen clothing worn by Sergius himself in the days of his flesh, and the rough wooden vessels from which he ate his simple meals. He was in his day a very homely and devout man, as are the present-day saints of the empire. The nimbus, the jewels, and the praise of men have all come afterwards.

It is in Kieff that we come into direct and personal touch with the Russian saints of ancient days. Here we find them at first hand, not represented by Sviatye Obraza (holy pictures), but in their own venerable persons. Under the renowned Lavra or Monastery of St. Antonius, mentioned in a previous chapter, are the catacombs which contain the remains of no fewer than eighty-one Russian saints. It is considered to be the rule governing canonization that the body of him whom heaven has appointed for sainthood is proof against decomposition. Is it not written, "Thou wilt not suffer Thine holy one to see corruption"?

Provided with a taper, which is purchased on the premises, descent is made along a dark and narrow passage. Presently the passage-way opens out into a kind of underground chapel, the sides of which are here and there cut into niches. In each niche lies an open coffin, which contains the mummified remains of the saint in his sumptuous ecclesiastical robes, with a costly Greek cross lying upon his breast. There are a number of such cavern-chapels, each with its assortment of saints, to whom the Orthodox visitors do the utmost homage, kneeling, kissing the coffins with affecting devotion, crossing themselves, and bowing until their heads touch the ground. The remains of John the Sufferer always attract admiration. This saint is said to have buried himself alive in his youth, in the fervour of his asceticism. For thirty years, so the story goes, he survived in his living grave in an upright position, his chin level with the ground, and only his head visible. He is thus to be seen to-day, his head projecting from the grave in this weird underground cemetery of Russian saints.

In the vicinity of the Troitsky Monastery there are catacombs, in which at the present day there is a brotherhood of monks who have taken solemn vows to behold no more either the light of heaven or the faces of their fellow-mortals upon earth. This is their idea of "saintship"!

Some of the legends of their saints current among the Russian peasantry are extremely amusing, others are quite irreverent and indecent. The saints appear to have been frequently on terms of astonishing intimacy with their humble worshippers. They have not hesitated to play tricks upon the unsuspecting moujik, and to mete out smart punishments for personal slights. These saints are often singularly human in their personal vanity, in their mutual jealousies, and at times in their impulsive kindnesses ; but like some living Russians they are not renowned for their reliability or their veracity.

One of the ablest defences of the veneration of defunct saints, their ikons and their relics, is that of M. Pobiedonostzeff, the late Ober-Procuror of the Holy Synod, in his work *Reflections of a Russian Statesman.* Says he :

" To the people, religious sentiments are expressed by a number of symbols and traditions which from the austerest standpoint may seem superstition and idolatry. Zealous defenders of the faith, alarmed and indignant, sometimes attempt with violent hand to destroy those external expressions of the vulgar faith, as Moses destroyed the golden calf. . . . Thence springs the puritan zeal. . . . .

" But in this envelope of the popular religion, often rude, are hidden elements of faith sus-

ceptible of development and sublimation, the germs of eternal truth. In tradition and in ceremonial, in symbolism and in custom, the people see the actual incarnation of that which, expressed in abstract formula, would be neither real nor effective.

"What if, destroying the husk, we deaden the kernel of truth; if, pulling up the tares, we pull up also the wheat? What if, in striving to purify the faith of the people under the pretext of enmity to superstition, we destroy the faith itself? If the forms by which simple men express their faith in the living God repel us, let us remember that it is to us perhaps that the command of our Divine Master was given, '*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones that believe in me.*'

"In an Arabic poem we find an instructive parable. Once Moses, while wandering in the wilderness, came upon a shepherd who was praying fervently to God. This was the shepherd's prayer: 'How shall I know where to find Thee, and how to be Thy servant? How I should wish to put on Thy sandals, to comb Thy hair, to wash Thy garments, to kiss Thy feet, to care for Thy dwelling, to give Thee milk from my herd; for such is the desire of my heart!' Moses, when he heard the words of the shepherd, was angered, and reproached

him: 'Thou blasphemest! The Most High God has no body! He wants neither clothing, nor dwelling, nor service. What dost thou mean, unbeliever?' The heart of the shepherd was saddened, because he could not conceive a Being without bodily form and corporeal needs. He was taken by despair, and ceased to serve the Lord. But God spake to Moses and said: 'Why hast thou driven away from Me, My servant? Every man has taken from Me the form of his being, and the manner of his speech. What to thee is evil to another is good. To thee it is poison, to another it is sweet honey. To Me words are nothing. I look into the heart of man.'"

This is excellently well put.

But here is no justification for the perpetuation of unworthy myths, or for the continued deception of the ignorant and the credulous. Surely the more excellent way would be to instruct them in the truth. Falsehood is not more beautiful than truth! Falsehood is not more easily comprehended than truth! Falsehood does not satisfy the human soul more perfectly than truth! A man's ignorance and artlessness are no excuse for denying him the bread of truth, and causing him to break his teeth upon the stones of crude superstitions and absurdities. Still less can there be any excuse for Pobiedonostzeff's cruel persecutions of those simple peasants who,

finding traditions and relics and ikons useless to their faith, laid them aside to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Moses made no mistake when he made short work of that shining popular idol, the golden calf, although Pobiedonostzeff appears to have thought he did!

There were some magnificent men among the departed saints of Russia. St. Philip, the heroic rebuker of the infamies of Ivan the Terrible, who suffered martyrdom for his faithfulness, was one of them. St. Stephen of Perm was another. According to Mouravieff, this saint penetrated far into the wild forests of unexplored Perm, at the base of the Ural mountains, and preached Christ among the heathen and savage tribes inhabiting those dark fastnesses. Many were the difficulties he encountered and the hardships and privations he endured for the Gospel's sake. But this brave pioneer reaped his harvest, established the outposts of the Kingdom of God, and left behind him an imperishable name as an ambassador for Christ.

The records of past generations show many another "holy man of God" whose character and works have blessed the Russian people. But there are countless saints alive in the land to-day witnessing patiently for their Lord. In these do we unfeignedly rejoice. We hear much of Russian nihilists, and atheists. Thank God,

there are men and women of far different character and aims in the empire. The best witnesses of the grace of the living God are the living saints of God. Many of them are in lowly positions in life—humble moujiks labouring upon the harvest-lands or the wide and fertile steppes, or felling timber for winter fuel in the boundless forests, or steering timber-rafts down the wide rivers, or driving droshkies at breakneck pace in the cobbled streets of the cities. Their light shines upon earth for the Lord they love, and they shall presently *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

AWAY SOUTH

XVI

AWAY SOUTH

"NEAR Taganrog several men entered our train. They were soon engaged in a lively conversation with the other passengers concerning living faith! From which it was clear that they had a thorough knowledge of the Bible." So said Pastor Peter Perk, a Mennonite minister of South Russia, referring to a railway journey to Rostov on the Don.

That is how Gospel grace has spread in South Russia. It has everywhere loosened the tongues of those who have inwardly experienced it. They cannot hold their peace. Every Christian is talking about Bible themes and spiritual religion.

In no part of the Giant-Empire is the work of God more interesting than in those provinces that skirt the shores of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. In no part of the country are there more tragical and heroic features in that story than here. The subject is worthy of an epic.

It is a greater theme than that which inspired Homer's muse when he told in immortal stanzas the prowess of the heroes of Ilion. No thought of possible earthly fame, no hope of a human "well-done," ever entered the noble souls of these lowly men when they quietly decided to obey their God in the very teeth of hell. Russia stands higher in the estimation of the world for the proved quality of her moujik-citizens. Who would venture to walk in the light of Truth when her ways are so precipitous, perilous and painful, while on the other hand the ways of Falsehood are so broad and smooth and safe? Glory be to God, thousands of our Russian brethren and sisters have frankly and placidly taken the risk. In these remote parts of the empire of which we now write, pains and penalties are still at times the result of fidelity to conscience.

One of the most recent instances of the heartlessness and intolerance of a provincial governor occurred within the last few months in the Crimea. General Dumbadse, governor of the province, had actually imprisoned and then banished peremptorily from their homes and the province the whole of the members of the little Baptist church of the village of Alupka. There are twenty-two of them, men and women. They were first ordered to appear before him at Yalta. This involved a long tramp through melting snow

of sixteen miles. They were very timid in the presence of the great man in his imposing uniform. He severely lectured them on the crime of forsaking his Church ; accused them of other offences, of which they were no more guilty than he was ; and then gave them eight days in which to settle their affairs and quit the district. The four deacons he sent at once to prison ; the others trudged back, with heavy hearts, the sixteen miles to their homes, and at once made such preparations as they were able for leaving their businesses and friends and the village, as far as they knew, for ever. In the home of one there was grievous sickness : a daughter lay at the point of death with typhus fever. Another sister had hitherto kept a small shop. It was no easy matter to settle up their life-interests and cut the ties of their daily lives. But it had to be done. Dumbadse had commanded. He is greater than the little Father, the Tsar, who cares for his children. At the end of eight days they said the last farewells and departed. Whither ? Ah, who can tell ? They have probably spent the summer tramping from village to village in South Russia, begging their food from compassionate moujiks, whose humanity is a welcome contrast to the behaviour of the tchinovnik who destroyed their little homes and cast them out to starve.

But on the other hand there are worthier men

in some of these high positions in the empire. The governor-general of the province adjoining the Crimea, Taurida, is a high-minded Christian gentleman. Pastor Balachin, one of the foremost preachers of the south, sought an interview with his excellency a short while ago, to thank him for his friendliness and the justice of his administration as far as it affected Evangelicals.

" Please assure all your friends of my desire to treat them fairly, and to give them the full enjoyment of all their rights under the law. I am quite satisfied that they are all faithful subjects of the emperor," he replied.

" When receiving me, and at the close of our interview, he very kindly shook me by the hand. Praise God for His goodness ! " said Pastor Balachin in reporting the visit.

The same brother gives us an insight into the itinerating labours of these Russian evangelists in one of his reports. The scene of the meetings is the country around the Sea of Azov :

" In the town of Yatigorsk I held six meetings in the Merchants' Club, with the approval of the Ataman (the Cossack governor of the province), and had attentive audiences of from five to six hundred people. In the city of Melitopol I held three meetings, by permission of the governor, in the town theatre, between six and seven hundred people being present. Five meetings were

held in the theatre at Berdjansk, at which the audiences averaged fifteen hundred."

Odessa is the metropolis of evangelical effort in the south. Odessa is the capital city of South Russia. It is situated on the shores of the tideless, storm-swept Euxine, and is one of the most populous and enterprising cities of the Russian Empire. It is a busy hive of industry and commerce; full not only of Russians, but of Jews, Poles, Armenians, Greeks, Turks, and Asiatics; a city of incessant activity, of international shipping and trade, whence come enormous supplies of steppe-grown wheat for our daily bread; of ostentatious opulence, and of appalling poverty.

The population is very much alive. It is all nerves. Here is a hotbed of the revolutionary propaganda, the "Socialist of the street" in contradistinction to the "Socialist of the school," and the fiery and unsparing anarchist. Here, too, on the other hand, is the infamous "Black Hundred," that mob of fulsomely loyal hooligans, who, at the signal from the St. Petersburg palaces, unleash the fierce dogs of rape and massacre, of loot and conflagration, upon a harmless and helpless people, their terrified fellow-subjects.

In this great city of Odessa, with its spacious and imposing public buildings in the central boulevards, its evil-smelling by-ways, its inter-

minable suburbs of hovels, its ample harbour, its busy quays and docks, its huge granaries and flour mills, its ubiquitous Cossacks to be seen in every post-office and tramcar, and along every thoroughfare (the city is at present under martial law), its splendid Greek cathedrals and churches with golden spires, and humble synagogues, its gaudy theatres and fashionable parks and promenades ; here in Odessa, under the spell of the boundless steppes of somnolent Russia north of her, and yet nervously responsive to the touch of Europe west of her, in her politics, her industries, her commerce, her social life, and her religious aspirations, the servants of God have found an all-too-needy sphere in which to labour for Him who, seeing the multitudes, was moved with compassion.

The district around Odessa, too, is being stirred, the moujiks and the farmers eagerly assembling when the meetings are held in the villages, many travelling considerable distances across the steppes to be present. Evangelists go out from the Odessa Churches to preach the Gospel at these meetings.

There is a considerable German-speaking population in the city, and Rev. A. Füllbrandt is the pastor of the important German Baptist Church. The Mildmay Mission to the Jews has laboured with great success among the Hebrew

population, an unmistakable revival following upon the great anti-Jewish *pogrom* of October 1905.

Pastor Vassily Pavloff, a swarthy and muscular specimen of Russian manhood, stands among the foremost of the Christian workers in Odessa. Mr. Pavloff is familiar with the inside of the "inner prison," an unspeakably dreadful den of human wild beasts. He has journeyed in chains on foot for hundreds of miles as a prisoner for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, with convict gangs. He has endured the privations of banishment to the Ural Mountains, the dividing line between Europe and Asia, a desolate no-man's-land, for two separate terms of four years each. He has lost wife and child in exile by flood and fever. And to-day, bronzed and toughened by many hardships, he is as busy as he ever was, preaching the Gospel, circulating the Word of God and simple Gospel literature, among the needy multitudes of Odessa and the south.

Brother Pavloff and his assistant, Mr. Skaldin, who was formerly a policeman and is now a most effective preacher, have their hands full.

Pavloff was called to the pastorate of the newly-formed Baptist Church, a daughter of the German Church in the city, in September 1907. He had previously for many years been pastor in Tiflis, in the Caucasus.

The Odessa hall, in which the meetings are held, seats about a thousand persons, and it is often much too small for the clamorous throng that would fain press into it. It is rented by the Church. The members pay about £100 per annum for the accommodation. It was formerly a military chapel belonging to the Greek Church. There is never a difficulty in gathering a congregation in Odessa to listen to the Gospel. The difficulty is at the other end, in persuading them to disperse after the meeting.

The story must be told of the wholesale arrest and imprisonment of a "sectant" picnic party while drinking coffee and singing hymns on a hill overlooking the Black Sea. It happened last year, and is characteristically Russian.

While waiting for a permit from the authorities to hold a Conference in the city, certain brethren proposed to beguile the tedium of delay by holding a picnic. Accordingly, on a lovely afternoon in May, one hundred and ninety-seven persons walked to the Shewachow Hill, about three miles out of Odessa. They had just got the coffee ready, and were in the full enjoyment of the sunshine, the sea-breeze, the glorious view below them, and, above all, each other's company, when they were startled by sharp commands, and saw a company of mounted police in front of them. Looking quickly about, they saw that

they were surrounded by a formidable circle of police, some on horseback, others on foot. They were ordered to form into lines, and, still surrounded by the police, were marched back to the city. Their appearance in the streets under such conditions caused something of a sensation.

"It was a spectacle inexpressibly sad," said a sympathetic eye-witness.

At the police-office they were crowded into cells, where they spent two days and two nights in the greatest discomfort. The cells were so full that there was no possibility of lying down to rest. Then the authorities condescended to announce to them their sentences: Pastor Pavloff, two months' imprisonment; the deacons of the church, one month each; some of the leading church-members, fourteen days; and all the rest seven days. The authorities apparently did not take the trouble to prove any breach of the law.

"Our imprisonment has not been in vain," said Brother Skaldin, the ex-policeman, afterwards. "Because we have every day been permitted to read the Word of God and to pray with the other prisoners, the warders permitting all who wished to do so, to be present in the large hall."

Rev. W. Fetler, who arrived in the neighbourhood of the picnic too late to be arrested, and

who surveyed the scene from a safe distance, hurried away to the prefect of the city to plead for his friends. The prefect was fierce.

"I am very sorry indeed that you were not caught also. You are one of the worst ring-leaders," he shouted. "I would have put you first in the prison if you had been found upon the hill!"

A visit was paid to Mr. Pavloff while serving his sentence, by Mr. W. S. Oncken of Lincoln, who thus describes it:

"The interview took place in the prison yard. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon. Sitting beside Mrs. Pavloff in the shadow of some trees, we awaited the arrival of the prisoner. Presently he came out of his cell at the end of the yard, a true stalwart puritan. We embraced.

"'How goes it, dear brother?' I inquired.

"'Thanks be unto God, very well. It will all fall out to the furtherance of His Kingdom.'

"As we were speaking in German, the official watching us approached, and said we must speak in Russian.

"'How can you expect such a thing?' said Mr. Pavloff indignantly. 'My visitor is an Englishman!'

"Upon that the official discreetly withdrew and left us to our conversation.

"We had half an hour's pleasant intercourse,

which will ever remain memorable. He charged me to convey heartiest greetings and his sincere thanks to friends in England for practical sympathy in the day of trouble."

Tiflis, the capital of the beautiful Caucasus region, is a centre in which the Evangel has always flourished. In a small room behind a shop on one of its steep streets, meetings of believers were held for years. The little company dare not sing; but they prayed together and studied eagerly the Word of God. In the Tiflis prison many have suffered for conscience' sake. Two brethren—a Lutheran and a Baptist—had engaged in many a hot disputation over Christian doctrine in the little room afore-mentioned. They both disappeared from view into the clutches of the police. One day they were astonished to meet in the prison kamera. They afterwards declared that in the joy of seeing each other again, and in their affectionate embraces, they forgot every theological difference. Controversy was overwhelmed in fraternal love.

Many Armenians of Trans-Caucasia are earnest Evangelicals. Dr. Baedeker's visits to their congregations were warmly appreciated. Patwakan Tarajantz of Baku, one of the doctor's interpreters, is a leader among them, and a wholehearted servant of the Lord. The Armenian Church has of late years passed through severe

trials. The seizure of its treasury by the Russian authorities in 1903, the appalling massacre of many Armenians about a year afterwards, and their consequent sense of oppression and of terror, have made them keenly responsive to sympathy and brotherly-kindness.

A remarkable service was held in the Armenian Cathedral in Baku in memory of the victims of the massacre. Great numbers of Mussulmans of the different races of Caucasus were present with their spiritual leaders. From the pulpit the Armenian archbishop uttered these eminently wise and pacific words :

" We are all brothers. Our religious differences ought not to be a cause of hatred. . . . We have all one common enemy and only one—Satan. May he be accursed ! "

AN EVANGELICAL PRESS AT WORK

XVII

AN EVANGELICAL PRESS AT WORK

IN those earlier happy and enlightened days of Alexander II., before the awful "terrorist" shadow fell upon the throne and people, there was much liberty granted to the Press. Papers and periodicals sprang up in St. Petersburg and Moscow like mushrooms in a showery summer. Some of this journalism was good, much was of the mere catchpenny kind, or worse. But the "sixties" passed away, the new liberties of publication were withdrawn, and once more the Most Holy Governing Synod, the Censor, and gross darkness reigned in the land. We cannot imagine the density of the spiritual night of a nominally Christian country, in which practically the only "religious" literature in circulation is a series of more or less fantastic legends of "saints," the object of which appears to have been rather to furnish the people with broad humour than to instruct them in the things of God. It is satisfactory to learn that great

numbers of these productions have been withdrawn from circulation within the last year or two, by order of the authorities.

For Evangelical publications an era of liberty has again dawned, and we have therefore quite an assortment of issues bearing the hopeful imprint "Vol. I., No. 1." It is the babyhood of an empire's religious journalism.

A premier position among Evangelical issues must be given to the late Colonel Paschkoff's collection of hymns, published in 1882. These books have a pathetic interest. They are the memorials of a bright morning, soon, alas! to be overcast, and to issue in a stormy day. These hymns were sung in the inspiring Gospel meetings held in the house of the Colonel, and in that of Princess Lieven, and in other residences of the St. Petersburg nobility who had come under the saving power of the Cross through the preaching of Lord Radstock. Those were indeed stirring times in the capital. The noble converts, in the enthusiasm of their first love for Christ, were ready to do and to dare anything for the beloved Name.

But the hand of authority fell heavily. The meetings for prayer were prohibited, the leaders were banished, the songs of praise were silenced; and these hymnbooks were sadly packed away on dusty shelves, awaiting the tedious passage

of the years of repression, and the coming of the ukase of freedom in 1905. These hymnbooks have again been brought out into the light, and, as recorded in an earlier chapter, are doing good service in the present revival.

In the house whence Colonel Paschkoff issued his religious hymns and tracts thirty years ago, Mr. Fetler sits to-day, superintending the output of evangelical literature in much larger quantities, that finds its way to almost every corner of the empire.

A volume with a lively history is entitled "Poems, Original and Translated." It bears the imprint, "St. Petersburg, 1902." As will be observed, it was printed three years earlier than the ukase of liberty. It is a volume of upwards of five hundred pages, and is published at 1.25 roubles (about 2*s.* 6*d.*). It has enjoyed a wide circulation, owing in part to the unusual circumstances of its issue. Mr. Ivan Prokhanoff, a busy engineer of St. Petersburg, was the editor; he is also author of several of the pieces. He thought it might stand a better chance of escaping the severity of the authorities if it were printed by the official printing establishment to the Ministry of the Interior. He therefore adopted the bold and straightforward course of inviting that office to undertake the issue. This they were willing to do as a matter of business;

and as it was simply a book of devotion they also undertook to secure its approval by the Censor. The volume duly appeared with the legend upon its cover: "Printed by the official printers to the Ministry of the Interior."

Wherever the book went, hostility was disarmed by this simple line of type, and on its merits the volume speedily gained the favour of the people. Then letters respecting it began to arrive at the Ministry of the Interior. M. de Plehve, who was shortly afterwards shockingly done to death by the bombs of the "terrorists," was then the Minister. Some of the letters called his attention to its doctrine, alleging that it was contrary to the teaching of the Greek Orthodox Church. Others praised the book, and asked M. de Plehve to send additional copies to various addresses.

M. de Plehve became excited, made inquiries for the volume, read it, and at once issued a circular to all provincial governments ordering its suppression. The season of its suppression was, however, brief, as the Minister met his death shortly afterwards.

The volume is full of the Gospel. Among the hymns are two by the Grand Duke Constantine. This royal officer was, until a short time ago, at the head of the Russian military academies. He recently issued an order to the governors and officers in these academies throughout

Russia, to the effect that the young men were to devote a portion of every morning and evening to the reading of the Bible, for their personal, moral, and spiritual edification. The officers were not to leave the oversight of this duty to the priests; but were themselves carefully to see that this was done, as "the moral and religious well-being of the young officers of the Tsar's army is a matter of the most profound importance to the Empire." Is not this something to delight the heart of every well-wisher of Russia? The Grand Duke has written two of the hymns in the collection. I have ventured to turn one of them into English verse:

"Teach me, O Lord, Thy love to know,
With all my powers of mind and thought;
The utmost consecration show
Of all this being Thou hast bought.

"To do Thy will, most Merciful,
I seek Thy guidance day by day;
To bear the trials that befall,
I would for constant courage pray.

"Teach me to love Thy children, Lord,
Redeemed by Thy most precious blood;
And may my love, on them outpoured,
Be pure and true, like Thine, O God!"

Russia has its religious monthly magazine, *The Christian*. The first number was issued early in 1906 by Mr. Prokhanoff, who lost no

time after the ukase in presenting the public with a good Evangelical periodical. But Russia has another *Christian*. The more thoughtful and progressive of the Greek clergy, ever watchful of the interests of religion in the realm, felt that this was a step forward which they might well imitate. They therefore, in 1908, for the first time issued a religious paper; and with a singular lack of inventiveness they have also selected the same title for their venture.

A Greek Orthodox priest has, however, been heard to avow boldly his preference for Mr. Prokhanoff's paper, as being more readable and helpful than its young "Orthodox" namesake. These things are signs of the times. But the great mass of the Greek Orthodox priesthood is, of course, reactionary, and would willingly put an end to all such literature.

Away in the south the Baptists have their denominational paper, formerly edited and published by Mr. Mazajeff, and at present by Rev. V. Pavloff of Odessa. The first number appeared in 1907. The Letts of the Baltic provinces also publish a Baptist paper. Our old friend, Mr. Patwakan Tarajantz, Dr. Baedeker's faithful companion and interpreter, is publishing a religious monthly in Baku, entitled *Joyful News*, which has an encouraging circulation; and other journalistic ventures which spread the Gospel

are beginning to appear here and there. Perhaps the most popular of these is a broadsheet of four pages, illustrated, which Mr. Prokhanoff is issuing weekly for wide circulation. Mr. Prokhanoff, who is physically a fine specimen of Russian manhood, devotes all his spare time most generously to this necessary and fruitful work. He resided in England for a year or two some time ago, and has many friends in this country.

Since Mr. Fetler's settlement in the capital, the production of evangelical literature in the Russian tongue has advanced apace. Translators have been at work upon some of the more popular elementary expository and devotional works of Great Britain and the United States. These have found a ready sale. Evangelistic tracts, Gospel hymns (chiefly translations of our British favourites), and similar publications have been circulated in large quantities. An illustrated monthly, *Faith*, has attained a circulation of three to four thousand, and has proved most useful.

The steadfast policy is that these publications shall be purely religious. Everything of a political character is carefully avoided, as are also all attacks on the Greek Church. The people are exhorted to read the Bible ; to repent of sin and forsake it, accepting the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Master ; to be devout, prayerful

and reverent ; to seek Divine grace to live a holy life in the sight of God. Controversies and seditious matter are never admitted to these pages. It is not their purpose to sow bitterness or strife.

Considerable assistance has been given by Mr. Fetler to the cause of religious freedom by the printing and circulating all over Russia of a little handbook containing full particulars of the Ukases and Manifestos of the Tsar bearing upon the rights of Baptists, with copies of correspondence with the authorities in St. Petersburg on all points previously in doubt. The cover is adorned, by permission of the Court, with a fine photo of the Emperor. The humble Baptist is now able to instruct the lofty tchinovnik, respecting his powers and their limitations. He may call his Gospel meetings, sing his hymns and read his Bible publicly with a mind at ease.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has an excellent and most judicious representative in Russia in Rev. Dr. Kean. The Society purchases its supplies of Russian and Slavonic Scriptures and portions from the Holy Synod, and circulates the Word of God throughout the empire, in Europe and in Asia, by means of its numerous colporteurs, in about sixty different languages and dialects. The Holy Synod also employs colporteurs for the same purpose—for which may God be praised !

BARONESS VON WREDE OF FINLAND

XVIII

BARONESS VON WREDE OF FINLAND

WE are again tumbling about in the Baltic. A great wave came splashing just now against our boat and fell upon the deck in a heavy shower of drenching spray. But the *Urania* rides the waters with queenly dignity, and steadily ploughs her way towards the south. It is only a few hours since we parted from Miss Von Wrede by the steamer's gangway at Hangö. She had come to see us off; had explored with interest our quarters below, had inquired as to our appreciation of the novel Finnish bill of fare, the *smergasbord*, the introductory savoury dishes, to which reference was made in the first chapter. We had parted with the heartiest "God bless you." It was a great privilege to make the acquaintance of one who has for years, and with unconditional consecration to the Master, laboured among the criminal population of Finland.

Baroness von Wrede has already been introduced to British readers in *Dr. Baedeker in Russia.*

It will be remembered that it was she who introduced the doctor to his visitations in the prisons in Finland; and she was the most successful interpreter he ever had, in his prison preaching. She was only in her teens when she herself began this work. As the daughter of a former governor of the Wasa province, she was allowed a liberty of access that would have been impossible to an ordinary lady; and her Christlike compassion for the fallen and abandoned, impelled her to the most self-denying efforts for the amelioration of their lot and their personal reclamation. Her friends have often wondered how her frail constitution has endured the physical activities and the nervous exhaustion necessarily involved in her work. Two Russian princesses visiting the south of France begged her to go for a brief holiday with them, and take a much-needed rest. But the promise given to the prisoners in Abo prison, that she would spend a few weeks longer with them, could not be broken. When they heard that she was not leaving them, they crowded around her in the prison-yard to shake her hands and utter their eager thanks. They gently patted her head and her shoulders in their demonstrations of affectionate joy, until she, who has been used to prisoners all her life, felt quite abashed, and the tears welled up into her eyes.

There are between six and seven hundred

criminals in the main Abo prison, and a smaller auxiliary prison near contains perhaps four hundred more. Therefore in these two prisons alone there is a large field of service. Miss von Wrede usually lives in the prison during her visitation, the governor courteously arranging for her accommodation. In addition to the simple Gospel services which she conducts, she makes it her object to come into personal communication with each prisoner as far as possible. This is a very slow process, and one which makes serious demands upon her nervous system.

"It is not so much what you say to them, as what they say to you, that helps them," she explained in her gentle persuasive manner.

The Baroness, with sisterly sympathy, just sits down in the cell and listens. Every man of them knows that he has a true friend in her. She asks about the wife and children at home, writes their letters for them, and in numberless little ways makes their interests her own, until before they are aware of it she is in possession of the key to their hearts, and is able to exercise in many cases a surprising influence for good upon them.

"There is one thing you may be sure I never do," she said. "That is, allude to their crime. I have been in the company of some who have done so—well-meaning people; but it is such a mistake! It usually hardens their

heart instantly. Prisoners who consider their sentences just, are extremely rare. They usually regard themselves as grievously wronged; and they are not open to argument upon the subject. He who begins by assuming even their guilt places himself immediately at a great disadvantage. Even such an expert as Dr. Baedeker once committed this blunder, when he and I were visiting one of our prisons. The man had committed several murders. But when the doctor inadvertently made allusion in his conversation to this crime, I could see the features of the convict change, and all receptibility to good impressions appeared to pass away. No! It is not thus that we shall awaken the conscience to repentance and to the desire for a better life."

The Baroness keeps a careful chronicle of her humble friends—in her own heart. When they are released from the prison and depart for their own homes in Helsingfors, Wiborg, or Tavastehus, or in the depths of the great forests, she does not forget them. An important and most fruitful part of her ministry lies in the visitation of her scattered sheep. She thus perpetuates and intensifies the friendship formed in the prison cells. All over the country this incessant visitation calls her. The State railways furnish a splendid testimonial to the value of her philanthropical labours by the issue to her of a free

travel-ticket on all the State lines, in order that she may be at liberty to move hither and thither at her discretion, and without expense, in her work.

But the homes of which she is in search not infrequently lie far from ordinary routes of travel; away in the dense interior of the pine forests, remote from the service of any train, and even of the innumerable steamers that ply on the intricate maze of lakes and waterways for which Finland is so justly famous.

Through miles of forest-lands, and across broad swamps, in which the stranger venturing alone would be easily lost, this devoted lady tramps day after day. She takes with her one or two attendants to carry the light luggage, and sets out with a brave heart to do on foot a journey of twenty, thirty, and occasionally even forty miles, to seek out a few families living in some distant settlement, in order to encourage ex-convicts, somebody's husbands, brothers, sons, to pursue the path of virtue and of the fear of the Lord.

The recent increase of an unpleasant and dangerous type of Socialism in her country, Baroness von Wrede thinks to be an unfavourable sign of the times.

"Sometimes Finns return from the United States of America, or other foreign lands," said she, "with an intense dissatisfaction, in many cases, with our existing home Government; and

with ideas respecting capital, and property, and authority, that do not make for peace in the land. And alas! with socialistic views are allied almost invariably atheistic tendencies and a bitter hostility to religion. In the prisons I am always meeting such. And I can do so little. I never argue. But," she continued with a smile, " when they get a letter from home containing bad news, I try to comfort them, and point them to One who can do it better than I can."

Miss von Wrede wears a simple little brooch. It is a silver shield, on which are cut in Finnish the words " Grace and Peace." Thus the first sight of her tall and slender form, as she quietly enters a prisoner's cell, is a message from heaven to him who sits moodily within. Her well-worn little Bible bears upon the fly-leaf an inscription to the effect that it was given to her by Dr. Baedeker on June 3, 1887, in commemoration of their first visit together to the Abo prison.

This quiet, unassuming Christian lady is known throughout Finland, and affectionately spoken of as Matilda Wrede. She has been greatly used of God to turn many to righteousness. Her influence in Finnish prisons is a power outweighing in value many laws, in securing upright living and the diminution of crime in the country. May God spare her long in this service. " I was in prison, and ye visited Me."

CHAINS AND CROSSES TAKEN OFF

XIX

CHAINS AND CROSSES TAKEN OFF

THE leg-fetters of Russian convicts sometimes shine like polished silver by continual wear. But these chains are not leg-fetters, nor do they shine, although they are of silver. They are dull through disuse. There is a small heap of them, and to each chain is attached a little crucifix of silver or of gold.

"Orthodox parents place the chain around the neck of their infant, and it is worn throughout life as a kind of charm," Mr. Fetler explained. "These were removed on the conversion of their owners, and handed to me."

A curious feature of the Greek Church crucifix is the unevenly placed foot-rest, which indicates the traditional belief of the Eastern Church that our Lord was lame.

Dostoieffsky, the Russian novelist, in his work *The Idiot,* has drawn a picture of the removal of the cross from the neck of the Russian—prince

and beggar—that will help us to appreciate its place in the life of the people :

" I went out for a stroll through the town," said the prince, " and observed a drunken soldier stepping along the pavement. He was all tattered and torn. He comes up to me and says :

" ' Buy my cross, sir, will you ? You shall have it for fourpence ; it is real silver.'

" I looked, and there he held a cross just taken off his own neck, evidently but a pewter thing, large, and made after some antique model. I fished out fourpence and put his cross on my own neck, and I could see by his face that he was as satisfied as could be, and thought he had succeeded in humbugging a foolish gentleman. Away he went to drink the value of his cross. I was greatly struck by this, but I thought, ' No ! I won't judge this poor drunken wretch in a hurry. God knows what warped and perverted ideas he may have in his brain ! '

. . . . .

" ' Prince," cried Parfen, ' have you got that cross which you bought from the soldier ? '

" ' Yes, I have.' The prince stopped again.

" ' Show it me here, will you ? '

" He unhooked his cross without taking the ribbon off his neck.

" ' Give it to me,' said Parfen ' I'll wear it, and you shall wear mine. I'll give mine to you.'

"'You wish to exchange crosses? Very well, Parfen. If that's the case I'm glad enough. That makes us brothers, you know.'

"The prince took off his pewter cross, Parfen doffed his gold one, and the exchange was made."

The neck-chains and crucifixes were part of a very foreign-looking assortment of gold and silver ware, emptied out upon my table by Mr. Fetler.

"These have all been given to us for the building of our great prayer hall. We have now to move from place to place, where we are able, temporarily, to hire a hall, and no place is large enough to hold the crowds that are eager to hear. See this finger-hat," he continued, taking up a thimble; "the young lady who gave it said she would buy a common one instead. This is of silver with four jewels, emeralds and rubies."

The collection was of considerable interest. There were gold and silver brooches and bracelets, silver teaspoons, civil and military decorations in cases, medals and crosses. An assortment of jewelled gold rings of designs never seen in England, two plain wedding-rings, a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, a quaintly engraved silver belt-buckle from Caucasus, three beautiful silver drinking-cups, and a silver cigarette case and

holder. The former owners of these latter articles sent the following note :

" Praise and gratitude to our Redeemer and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, from prisoners who were in the captivity of alcohol and tobacco. We lay down our arms at Thy feet. Bless, Lord, Thy feeble servants, the preachers. Fill them with Thy Holy Spirit for Thy glory."

These Russian converts, like the " Old Believers " of Russia, the most numerous and the most ancient dissenters from Greek Orthodoxy in the empire, are opposed to the use of vodka and the pipe Another convert, in laying her simple trinkets and ornaments upon God's altar, sent with them this touching message in her native language :

" Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.

" Dear brother, I have brought these for the building of the prayer house, because I do not want any more to adorn myself with these things. I have nothing more of my own (jewellery) ; but what I had I have brought from my whole heart. Let Him take it all. It is ' the Lord's offering.'—*Exodus* xxxv. 24.

"M. D. YABLAKOFF."

A further generous gift was a parcel of about sixty oil-paintings, presented by the widow of a

well-known Russian artist, M. Yasnosky, to be sold for the building fund.

The substantial success of Mr. Fetler's work is evidenced by two large photographic groups. The first is a group of about two hundred men and women, with Mr. Fetler in the foreground. These are mostly members of the Russian Baptist Church, which numbers nearly three hundred persons. When it is remembered that it was not permissible for a Russian to leave the Greek Church prior to the manifesto of October 1906, it will be seen that evangelism has made remarkable progress.

"They look to be warmly clad," observed a friend. Many of the women wore woollen handkerchiefs around their heads, while the men were in great-coats and furs, with fur caps.

"The winters are cold in St. Petersburg," replied Mr. Fetler.

The second group is even more striking and gratifying. There are about forty men, with Mr. Fetler in the centre. These are mostly deacons.

"And every deacon is a preacher in Russia," said the pastor, with a merry laugh. "Whatever gift they possess they must use for Christ, certainly."

Preaching-classes are held in the week as often as possible, and on the Sunday mornings these

men scatter throughout the city and far along the banks of the Neva, " to preach and to teach Jesus Christ " wherever a house is thrown open to them.

Who could have foreseen that in three or four short years all this organized and far-spreading activity would have been the outcome of Brother Fetler's settlement in the Russian capital !

The need for the central prayer hall is great and urgent. By permission of the Tsar a site has been bought on Basil Island, in the north-west of the city. The building will cost about £5,000, and the Russians are anxious that it may be opened in time for next winter's work. With magnificent self-denial they have contributed to the fund, and Christians in England will regard it as a high honour to be permitted to render help. There never was such an opportunity for the Gospel in Russia as there is to-day.

EVANGELICALISM CHALLENGED AND JUSTIFIED

XX

EVANGELICALISM CHALLENGED AND JUSTIFIED

"WONDER of wonders! For a thousand years the Holy Orthodox Church of Christ has been known in Russia; tens of millions of the Russian people, together with their Tsar, love Christ and His Holy Church. And now these new-comers from abroad cry aloud that the Orthodox ones do not believe in Christ, and offer to show them Christ and to instruct them in faith in Christ! Is this not to mock the Russian people?"

The above is quoted from a pamphlet, "THE SECTANTS OF MOSCOW," published in that city early in the year 1910. The pamphlet begins with the text, "*Ye have heard that antichrist shall come. Even now are there many antichrists*" (1 John ii. 18).

The challenge to Evangelicalism contained in the above quotation is not unreasonable. Evangelicalism must show cause why it should not be

branded as an enemy, as antichrist, and promptly extirpated. There is only one way by which it can do this. If through its efforts men are *turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,* it will have in the most conclusive manner demonstrated its Divine authority and power. So declared our Lord, the Head of the Church. *By their fruits ye shall know them. Grapes are not gathered from thorns.* Thus He answered His enemies, when on earth. They wickedly said of His ministry: "This is of Beelzebub!" He condescended to reply: "*If Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand?*" The evil one does not fight against himself, or uproot sinful ways from human hearts or lives. But his rule in many persons has undoubtedly been broken by the preaching of these evangelists. His slaves have been brought in thousands *out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God.* Does Orthodoxy show like blessed results? For by this divinely appointed test even Orthodoxy, though a thousand years old, must continually be tried. It must not rest content with its great past history. The Lord of His Church looks for fruit on His trees every year! The best friends of the Greek Church in Russia earnestly pray that she may become increasingly a living spiritual power in the land!

"If Fetler had gone to China or Japan or to the Eskimos. . . . In London there are thousands of infidels: why does not Fetler preach there? . . ."

Thus the hostile press. In answer: Did not the Divine Master command him whom he healed, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee"? Pastor Fetler early felt the need of China for the Gospel; and had not the Divine call to his own native land come with irresistible power he would assuredly have gone to China, as his critic now suggests. In London, too, during his few years' residence in that city, the young student laboured day and night in the Gospel—he *has* "preached there."

But the tremendous need of his own much-loved homeland he and his brother evangelists cannot forget. Many of its millions are sunk in sin, ignorant of the Gospel, without hope, with but few to really care for their souls. Therefore to others is left the care of the Eskimos and the Japanese, and, as in our Lord's parable, they "call their friends and neighbours together" to hear the glad message of Redemption and the love of God for the perishing.

The Russian people may well rejoice that the Holy Scriptures have for many generations been read in the churches of their land; that the

name of Christ is everywhere revered ; that the voice of prayer rises daily from millions of persons within her borders. Herein the nation has great light and much responsibility.

Unlike other foreign lands wherein the evangel is something of an exotic, a foreign import, in Russia the Gospel is indigenous. The Bible is a revered book, albeit largely unread by the people. The ancient state religion is Christianity. The form of godliness is everywhere ostentatiously present. The people are devout, too, with an Oriental and fanatical fervour. But even more striking is the fact that the Gospel preachers who have of late years arisen are of Russian blood, with Russian ideals and idiosyncrasies and sympathies, proud of their land, ambitious of its honour and highest welfare, and loyal to its Tsar. They do not ask, " What does England say ? They are *not* ' foreigners.' " They ask, " What say the Scriptures ? " And when they find in Bible teaching and precept that they are in accord with England or Germany or any other foreign country, then so much the better for that other land. This is just what has happened. Searching for Divine grace and holiness in the Word, they readily found what they sought for, and then they learned that other people had also discovered the same good things, of whom many thousands were citizens

of the United Kingdom. There is consequently great joy with them and with us.

The attitude of the Russian State Church towards these young and hopeful "sectant" communities will be watched in all Protestant lands with keen interest. Orthodoxy is earnestly considering the problem. Only a few months ago another Conference was held in the city of Minsk, "to consider the best means of opposing the Baptists and the Catholics, who are making many converts," so the report ran, "from the Orthodox Church." In the old days when Pobiedonostzeff shaped the Russian religious policy as Ober-Procurator of the Most Holy Governing Synod, that policy was infamously cruel; and the black record of the tyrant will remain for ever against him on the page of history, placing him among the worst of the pagan or Roman Catholic persecutors.

But the empire has arisen to better and nobler days. The Lord Emperor is a tolerant monarch, and his minister, the Ober-Procurator of the Synod, M. Lukianoff, is a humane and enlightened man. Proof of this has just been given in the reply of the Synod to the petition of the "Union of the Russian People" that the "sectants" should be immediately suppressed and their leaders exiled to Siberia. For this reply M. Lukianoff and the St. Petersburg Metropolitan

Antonius were mainly responsible. In effect they said, "If these erring sheep are to be restored to the true fold, it must be, not by cruelty, but by reason and patience."

The dangers menacing Evangelicalism to-day are principally three. They lie not so much in the Tsar's civil government as (1) in the present lack of organization and co-operation among these earnest and faithful, but uninstructed and widely-scattered Churches. The hearty sympathy and tolerant charity of Christians of all denominations here in Great Britain and in America, and on the continent of Europe, and a genuine interest in their welfare and in the progress of the work of God in Russia, will greatly encourage and strengthen the hands of our Russian brethren in their efforts to shape an internal polity. And as the years pass, they will bring by the Divine blessing, as the fruits of maturer experience, helpful organization, a ministry of evangelists and pastors "learned in the Scriptures and able to teach others also," an established and judicious periodical and other literature, and many other steadying and unifying advantages.

(2) Of the difficulties arising from the ignorance, prejudices, and officiousness of some provincial authorities a word or two may be said. Distances between the centres are so vast that consistent government, as we have it, is practically

unknown. Every provincial governor is an absolute monarch in many details of his administration, and even the tchinovniks of much lower rank wield a measure of despotic authority that to us of the Western nations, who are ruled "by laws" and not "by men," appears unreasonable and impolitic. When, therefore, you find a governor of one city forbidding a public lecture on Halley's comet, lest presumably there should be set forth some doctrine subtly inimical to the interests of the autocracy (the Governor of Tula in March last), another governor refusing to authorize a city football league for the same patriotic reason (the Governor of Moscow in December 1909), and a third forbidding mention of the Government vodka monopoly in an Anti-alcoholic Congress (in St. Petersburg in January last), it will be at once seen that "sectants" must walk warily. On the other hand it will be remembered that in September 1909 permission was readily accorded by the Governor of St. Petersburg to the body known as "Evangelical Christians" to hold their first Conference in the city. This is one of many similar instances of the tolerance and confidence shown of late by the "powers that be" to non-orthodox bodies.

(3) The menaces of the "Union of the Russian People" constitute the most serious peril of the hour. The street mob is the bloody *hand* of

this ubiquitous organisation. The *body*, active and alert, is a great mass of public opinion all over the Empire that despises and dreads our Western ideas of government and of liberty; that is fostered by a plausible pride of race and patriotism; that deplores as weakness and folly the recent departures from hereditary autocracy in imitation of the chaotic methods of Western lands; and that counsels a bold and swift withdrawal of all concessions to the "foreign and anti-Russian spirit." The controlling *brain* of the "Union of the Russian People" is the Church. Jealous of her ancient monopolies, and hitherto secure in the enjoyment of exclusive spiritual authority in the realm, she has been awakened from her slumbers by the voices of intruders.

As in the case of most persons suddenly awakened, the feeling of alarm is ridiculously greater than there is any cause for. The voices are those of friends and not of foes. Their joyous tone presages a brighter day for Russia and a nobler empire for the Tsar. The Orthodox Church herself will be revived and renewed, will increase her strength and her usefulness by the blessing of God through this awakening of the people to the necessity and the glories of scriptural and spiritual religion. They are enemies of the Orthodox Church, of the Tsar, and of Holy Russia,

who utter the fanatical cry, "This movement is of Western Europe, therefore we must put it down!" It is not of the west, nor of the north, nor of the south. It is from above! It is of God! And woe be to him who dares to hinder it! In the eighteenth century our English Church was asleep, and our people were sunk in drunkenness and vice. Then arose Whitefield, and Ingham, and the Wesleys, upon whom the Spirit of God rested. They opened the Holy Word and pleaded with our people to repent of their sins and turn to God. Their evangelism was irregular; and many Churchmen denounced it. But God made it a blessing to the people, and to the English Church also. Parish churches were opened everywhere for evening preaching of the Gospel—an unheard-of innovation. And with the flaming torch of truth and grace, a mighty fire of spiritual enthusiasm was kindled in the land, by the light of which our nation has made astonishing advances on the upward path.

We are not without signs that the Orthodox Church has already begun to shake herself from the dust, and to put on her beautiful garments of spirituality, and truth, and charity. It is certainly not by persecutions, nor even by bitter controversies that blessing will come to either side. It is satisfactory to know that the evangelists continue steadfastly to preach the supreme

necessity for individual repentance of sin and personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation for all men everywhere; and multitudes hearing receive the Divine message and go on their way rejoicing.

Western Christendom, looking eastward towards the land of the morning light, fervently prays, "God bless Russia, her Tsar, and her peoples!"

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